













Notes on Selection From  
Wordsworth

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Providence, *vis*, the stoppage of his allowance which compelled him to return to England.

When nearly nineteen thousand persons had been guillotined, and the Reign of Terror was followed by a military despotism Wordsworth realised that, if he could not live in France, it was safer to exist under the English constitution. He consoled himself by writing a small volume of verse, issued in 1793; where the lines on *Guilt and Sorrow* showed the harm that had been worked in him by his French experiences.

"In 1795 a friend by name Calvert, dying left him some 1000—a very memorable bequest, as it left Wordsworth, a vain liver and a high thinker (see Sonnet on *London*, 1802) in a position to obey his lofty nature, free from sordid cares. With help in addition of £1,000 from his father's estate, his sister (Dorothy) to whom had come a legacy of £100 and he set up house at Racedown, Dorsetshire."—*Hales*.

This sister was through the poet's life a most congenial and impressive presence. It was she, he tells us, who maintained for him a saving intercourse with the world.

for him the obstructed passage

of time again came continually

lays that his imagination

could hardly be lav

ished to the world.

It was who softened and humanised him, to the more hidden beauties, his heart to the things. When Wordsworth at last was done for him, he wrote of her:— "those life

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"She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,  
And humble cares and humble fears.  
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,  
And love, and thought, and hope."

In 1795 he made the acquaintance of Coleridge, and by the next year their intimacy was complete. Wordsworth and his sister removed in 1797 to Alfoxden, in Somersetshire, near the Quantock Hills, and became close neighbours of the Coleridges.

1797—1814. The Wordsworths had a pleasant change in the winter of 1798, when they went with Coleridge to Germany and stayed at Goslar, near to the Harz mountains. It was then that Wordsworth wrote some of his best poems and planned *The Prelude, or the Growth of a poet's Mind* which he dedicated to Coleridge.

After his marriage in 1802 with Mary Hutchison\* he resolved upon a longer poem of philosophical thought, to be called *The Recluse*, and to consist of three parts; but only the second was finished, and published under the name of *The Excursion*. *The Prelude* had been intended as an introduction to the whole. It was not completed until 1805 and *The Excursion* was published nine years later.

1814—1850. The last thirty-six years of his life were spent in quietude. Some family troubles occurred at one part of the time, yet were alleviated by the pleasure he received by the general recognition of his work. Oxford, in 1839, conferred upon him an honorary D. C. L., and on the death of Southey, in 1843, he was made Poet-Laureate. He died full of years and of honour in 1850, and was buried in the church-yard of Grasmere among the hills and dales he loved so well.

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\* It was she who composed the two best lines in *The Daffodils* (21, 22.)

thus described by the poet :—

“A creature not too bright and good  
For human Nature's daily food;  
A perfect woman nobly planned  
To warm, to comfort, and command, &c.”

## § 2. WORDSWORTH, THE MAN.

"The strongest of my impressions respecting him," says Aubrey de Vere, "was that made by the manly simplicity and lofty rectitude which characterised him." In one of his sonnets he wrote of himself thus: "As a true man who long had served the lyre; it was because he was a *true man* that he was a *true poet*. He was a man of original and energetic genius; but it was his strong and truthful moral nature, his intellectual sincerity, the biding conscientiousness of his imagination, so to speak, which enabled that genius to do its great work and bequeath to the England of the future the most solid mass of deep hearted and authentic poetry which has been bestowed on her by any poet since the Elizabethan age."

In Wordsworth's character we distinguish the following prominent traits:—

(a) *Its moral and spiritual strength.* All his energies were consecrated to the service of lofty ideals. With this high-soaring aspiration was combined the most faithful adherence to the humble duties of life. He was himself the best illustration of the ideal wise man typified by his *Skylark*:—

"Type of the wise who soar but never roam,  
True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

Wordsworth lived a pure and simple life, always believing that he was called by heaven to produce some great work.\* "Plain living and high thinking" was his motto.

(b) *Exquisite sympathy.* He was gifted with a sweet sympathy for women and children, by the receptivity of his

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\* In this respect he approached Milton, whose life was one long preparation for the great task of writing a sublime epic. Wordsworth in his sonnet on *London, 1802* recalls the powerful example of Milton to infuse a healthy moral life into the stagnant society of the time.

nature, very like a child himself. His sister was to him a powerful presence. Her influence is distinctly traceable throughout his poems. To his wife he was ever kind and loving.\* He paid her the best compliment by owning that one of the brightest gems of poetry (*Daffodils* 21, 22) emanated from her. His sympathy for children is seen in his touching little poems, *Lucy Gray*, *Alice Fell*, &c.

(c) *His love of law and order.* † He hailed with enthusiasm the outbreak of the French Revolution as the dawning of a new era of Liberty for man, but he recoiled with horror from the lawless despotism into which it finally led. His indignation breaks forth in his '*Rob Roy*,' where he contrasts the 'outlaw of a savage clan' with the tyrant Napoleon. His experiences in the time of the French Revolution thus eventually worked for the good. There grew up in him a hatred for lawless revolt and a genuine patriotism for his own country. He cast aside the vague humanitarianism of Rousseau; and set before himself, as a special task, the work of teaching the connexion between nature and mankind.

### § 3. WORDSWORTH'S POLITICS.

Wordsworth did not accept the term 'Reformer,' because it implied an organic change in the institutions of the country, and this he deemed both useless and dangerous; but he used to say that, while he was a decided conservative he remembered that to preserve institutions we must be improving them. He was indeed, from first to last, pre-eminently

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\* He is here the contrast of Milton whose cynical contempt for woman is so plainly expressed in his *Samson Agonistes*.

† On this point Wordsworth may be compared with Tennyson whose poems are based upon the belief in law as the life of Nature. According to Tennyson, freedom is to be gained by years of patient watching and waiting. The 'flashing heats' of a revolution retard men's progress towards liberty.

a patriot—an impassioned as well as a thoughtful one. Yet his political sympathies were not with his own country only, but with the progress of humanity. Till disenchanted by the excesses and follies of the first French Revolution, his hopes and sympathies associated themselves ardently with the new order of things created by it. To the end his sympathies were ever with the cottage and hearth far more than with the palace. If he became a strong supporter of what has been called "the hierarchy of society" it was chiefly because he believed the principle of "equality" to be fatal to the well-being and true dignity of the poor. Moreover, in siding politically with the crown and the coronets, he considered himself to be siding with the weaker party in these democratic days.

#### § 4. WORDSWORTH'S RELIGION.

It has been observed that the religion of Wordsworth's poetry, at least of his earlier poetry, is not as distinctly "revealed religion" as might have been expected from the poet's well-known adherence to what he has called emphatically "The Lord and mighty Paramount of truths." He once remarked that on religious matters he ever wrote with great diffidence, remembering that if there were many subjects too low for song, there were some too high. Fortunately his diffidence did not keep Wordsworth silent on sacred themes. His later poems include many distinct as well as beautiful confession of Christian faith; and one of them, *The Primrose of the Rock*, is as distinctly Wordsworthian in its inspiration as it is Christian in its doctrine. Wordsworth was a "High-churchman" and also in his prose-mind strongly anti-Roman Catholic, largely on political grounds; but that it was otherwise as regards his mind poetic is obvious from many passages in his Christian poetry, especially those which refer to the monastic system and the Schoolmen, and



his sonnet on the Blessed Virgin, whom he addresses as—  
 "Our tainted nature's solitary boast."

## § 5. WORDSWORTH, THE EXPONENT OF A REACTION IN POETRY.

Wordsworth pushed the domain of poetry into a whole field of subjects till then unapproached by any other poet. In him, perhaps more than in any other contemporary writer, either of prose or verse, we see the highest spirit of the nineteenth century, in its contrast with that of the eighteenth, summed up and condensed. What most strikes one, in recurring to the poetry of the Pope and Dryden period, is its external character, and the limited range of subjects it dealt with. Pope is the representative of the *Classical School* of poetry. In the writings of his time the play of the intellect was little leavened by sentiments. The heart, it would seem, was either dormant, or kept under strict surveillance, and not allowed to interfere with the working of the understanding. Literature appeared like a well-bred, elderly gentleman, in ruffles and peruke, of polished but somewhat chilling manners, which repelled all warmth of feeling with the frost of etiquette.\* And just as in such society conversation was limited to certain superficial subjects and some stock phrases, so it was with the literature of the period of Anne and the first two Georges. From this very limitation in the range both of subjects and treatment there arose in the hands of the masters (*e. g.*, Pope) a perfection of form unrivalled in literature.

The *Classical School* of the 18th century was followed by the *Romantic School* of the early nineteenth century. In Cowper was the beginning of the recoil. But it was by Wordsworth that the revolt was most openly proclaimed and

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\* Shairp, *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*.

most fully carried out. Whereas the poetry of the former age had dealt mainly with the outside of things, or if it sometimes went further, did so with such a stereotyped manner and diction as to make it look like external work, Wordsworth went straight into the inside of things. In all his delineations he passed from the surface to the centre, from the outside looks to the inward character. This one characteristic set him in entire opposition to the art of the Classical School. Out of it arose the entire revolution he made in subjects, treatment and diction. Pope and his school held that the language of poetry must be essentially different from that of prose, but Wordsworth and his school taught that the poet is a man, therefore the language of poetry must be the language of common men.

The name **Lake School** was applied by the Reviewer to those poets and scholars who dwelt in the neighbourhood of the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland. This most prominent members of this school were Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, De Quincey and Wilson. In romance, freedom and sympathy with nature Wordsworth indeed owed much to Coleridge and Southey and especially to the former, yet the application of the term "Lake School" bears with it more of falsity than truth, for there was no family likeness between them.

#### § 6. WORDSWORTH'S THEORY OF POETRY.

(1) It is constantly asserted that W. effected a reform in the language of poetry, that he found the public bigoted to a vicious and flowery diction and that he led them to sense and simplicity. He maintained that the colloquial language of the rustics was the most philosophical and enduring, and the fittest for verse of every description. But fortunately his practice was better than his theory. When his finest verse is brought to the test of his principle, they

agree no better than light and darkness. Here is his way of describing the solitary heart of Helvellyn :—

There sometimes doth a leaping fish  
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer ;  
The crags repeat the raven's croak,  
In symphony austere, &c., &c. (*Fidelity*.)

This is to write like a splendid poet and not to write as rustics talk.

(2) A second canon laid down by Wordsworth was, that poetic diction is or ought to be, in all respects the same with the language of prose. Wordsworth's works, notwithstanding his horror of poetic phraseology, present examples of a violation of this canon.

"Evening now unbinds the fetters  
Fashioned by the glowing light,"

would be a fantastic mode of saying, in any description of prose, that the coolness of evening restored the activity suspended by the sultriness of the day !

## § 7. WORDSWORTH, THE POET.

The first appearance of Wordsworth as a poet met with a very cold reception. One class of critics noted chiefly his defects. Jeffrey thought of "crushing" the *Excursion* by a single article in the *Edinburgh Review*. Byron spoke of it as his "aversion." Macaulay regarded the poet as a signal example of literary failure. Posterity however has learnt to reverse the judgment and appreciate his merits.

The greatest merit of Wordsworth's poetry lies in the *simplicity of its style* and the *purity of its thought*. He possessed a power of happy phrase belonging only to the best poets, and could convey in the simplest and shortest of words, the great truths underlying the commonest ex-

periences of life. He was not a lover of romance; it was not in his line to describe blood-curdling adventures or the thrilling vicissitudes of life. He himself says:—

"The moving accident is not my trade,  
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts;  
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,  
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts."

—*Hart-leap Well*, Part II.

"Wordsworth is pre-eminently the poet of reflection and thought. Of dramatic power\* and epic he possessed little. He vaguely meditated a great epic poem after the manner of Milton, or rather of Spenser. But he lacked objective faculty. His genius was altogether introspective• and interpretative. He loved to look on the face of Nature, but to him the face was precious as the index of the soul. It was the meaning of things he cared for, not the things themselves.† It was the inner voice that he heard and echoed. Like Spenser, he was most eminently a spiritual poet. In the mere description of Nature many writers have surpassed him, many have reproduced more effectively her terrors and her lovelinesses, and portrayed her visible lineaments with greater grace and power, but no one has ever entered so far into the services of heart or partaken so deeply of her inmost communings.

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,  
His daily teachings had been woods and rills,  
The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

\* His *Laodamia* is a beautiful exception.

† "Whatever he did see he saw to the very core. He did not fumble with the outside or the accidents of the thing, but his eye went at once to the quick,—rested on the essential life of it."—*Shairp*.

Everywhere he heard her deep mysterious speech. There was no rock, no flower, no creature in short, human or other, in the wide world but for him it was one of Nature's words\* What he cultivated in himself was a calm, quiet mind, vexed by no tumults such as might make that pure refined voice inaudible to him."—*Hales*.

### § 8. THE MERITS AND DEFECTS OF WORDSWORTH'S

#### POETRY.

##### *Merits:*

(a) His *simplicity*. Wordsworth drew uncommon delights from very common things. He had a unique personal gift of discovering the deepest secondary springs of joy in what ordinary men took as a matter of course, or found uninteresting or even full of pain.

(b) There is volition and *self-government* in every line of his poetry. Poets as a rule, lust for emotion; some of the most unique poets—*e. g.* Byron and Shelley—pant for an unbroken succession of ardent feelings. But Wordsworth was almost a miser in his reluctance to use the spiritual capital at his disposal. This is Wordsworth's "emotional economy."

(c) His *isolation*. He is the most solitary of poet. Of him, with far more point than of Milton, may it be said, in Wordsworth's own words, that "his soul was like a star and dwelt apart." In solitude only could his poem have originated, and in solitude only can they be perfectly enjoyed.

(*Hutton.*)

\* "To me the meanest flower that blows can give.  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

"To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower,  
Even the loose stones that cover the highway,  
I gave a moral life; I saw them feel,  
Or linked them to some feeling."

(d) His *veracity*. All genuine imagination is essentially truthful. The reports it brings in, so far from being mere fancies, are the finest, most hidden truths. In Wordsworth, the higher his inspiration rises, the more penetrating is his truthfulness. There is a distinction between ideal truth and scientific truth. Yet every one must feel that

"The moon doth with delight  
Look round her when the heavens are bare,"

gives the essence of a clear moonlight sky more than any mere meteorologist can do. What scientific words can render the impression made by a solitary western peak, like

"There is an eminence of these our hills  
The last that parleys with the setting sun"?

It is the rendering of the inner truth of things which Arnold has happily called 'the interpretative power of poetry.' (*Shuirp*.)

(e) What Matthew Arnold calls *his fertile application of ideas to human life*. The end of his poetry is mainly ethical. You are braced in the mountain atmosphere of this poet. You become stronger, more hopeful, encouraged to do your own work vigorously and well. (*Roden Noel*.)

(f) An *austere purity of language* both grammatically and logically; in short, a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning.

(g) A correspondent *weight and sanity* of the thoughts and sentiments—won, not from books, but—from the poet's own meditative observation. They are fresh and have the dew upon them. His Muse, at least when in her strenght of wing, and when she hovers aloft in her proper element,

Makes audible a linked lay of truth,  
Of truth profound a sweet continuous lay,  
Not learnt, but native ; her own natural notes.

This may perhaps account to a certain extent for Wordsworth's early unpopularity. But it is enough, if a work be perspicuous to those for whom it is written, and

"Fit audience find, though few."

(h) The sinewy *streangth* and *originality* of single lines and paragraphs : the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction.

(i) A *meditative pathos*, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility ; a *sympathy with man as man*, the sympathy indeed of a contemplator, rather than a fellow-sufferer or co-mate, but of a contemplator from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of nature. Here the Man and the Poet lose and find themselves in each other, the one as glorified, the latter as substantiated. In this mild and philosophic pathos, Wordsworth has no compeer.\* In depth of pathos *The Affliction of Margaret* has no parallel. The poet's exquisite sympathy for man as man is seen in his *Rob Roy's Grave* in which he condemns Napoleon for his self-centred ambition which paid no respect to the natural liberty of man. His sympathy for child-life appears in his little poems, *Alice Fell*, *We are Seven*, &c.

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\* Cf. the last stanza of *Lucy*, II. in which the poet addresses his native land,—“Thy mornings showed, &c.” in which “the Poet, as it were, *spreads day and night* over the object of his affections, and seems, under the influence of passionate feeling, to think of England, whether in light or darkness, only as her play-place and verdant home”—S. C, *Biographia Literaria*, foot-note.

Wordsworth's *sympathy for dumb animals* is displayed in *The Red-breast, To a Butterfly, The Hart-leap Well, &c.*, —His deep concern for vegetable life runs through his *Lines Written in Early Spring*, his *Nutting, &c.*

(j) The gift of *imagination* in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of the *fancy*, Wordsworth, according to Coleridge (*Biogr. Lit.* vol. II), is not always graceful, and sometimes recondite. But in imaginative power he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton.

#### DEFECTS :

(a) The *inconstancy of the style*. In his poetry there are sudden and unprepared transitions from lines or sentences of peculiar felicity—at all events striking and original—to a style, not only unimpassioned but undistinguished.

But say what was it ? Thought of fear !  
Well may ye tremble when ye hear !  
—A household Tub, like one of those,  
Which women use to wash their clothes,  
This carried the blind boy—*The Blind Highland Boy*

This made Wordsworth's name a bye-word for bathos and puerility.

(b) There is, not seldom, a *matter-of-factness* in certain poems. This may be divided into, first, a laborious minuteness and fidelity in the representation of objects, and their positions as they appeared to the poet himself ; secondly, the insertion of accidental circumstances which appear superfluous in poetry, where the reader is willing to believe for his own sake. He is often *egotistic*. He occasionally thrusts his personality into his descriptions. *E. G.*, "*I believe*," l. 32 (*There was a Boy*), *Unless I now confound, &c.*, ll. 48, 9 (*Nutting*.)



(c) An undue predilection for the *dramatic form* in certain poems.

(d) An intensity of feeling disproportionate to such knowledge and value of the objects described, as can be fairly anticipated of men in general, even of the most cultivated classes. Hence Wordsworth's occasional *prolixity*, repetition, and an eddying, instead of progression, of thought.

(e) *Thoughts and images too great for the subject*. This is an approximation to what might be called mental bombast, as distinguished from verbal. (*Coleridge*.)

(f) The natural rigidity of his mind (due to constant and studied meditation) was great, and hence probably, his great *deficiency of humour*.

#### § 9. WORDSWORTH, THE POET OF MAN.

The power of imagination manifests itself in Wordsworth in two directions—as it is turned on Nature and as it is turned on Man. It is for the sake of clearness that we consider these two directions separately, though, in reality they often blend.

There is, however, this difference, that while his imagination has no limit when working upon Nature, its range is more restricted when fixed upon human heart and character. For man as he is found in cities, or as he appears in the complex conditions of advanced civilisation, Wordsworth cares little; he turns his back on the street, the drawing-rooms, the mart and the change, but lovingly enters the cottage and the farm, and walks with the shepherd on the hills, or the vagrant on lonely roads. The choice of his characters from humble and rustic life was caused partly by the original make of his nature, partly from his early training, which made him more at home with these than with

artificial man, partly also from that Republican fervour which he imbibed in his opening childhood. He believed that in country people what is permanent in human nature, the essential feelings and passions of mankind, exist in greater simplicity and strength. Their manners, he thought, spring more directly from such feelings, and more faithfully express them, and their lives and occupations are surrounded with what is grandest and most beautiful in nature.

There is still another limitation. Even in these characters he is not so much at home in dealing with their trivial outside appearance or little laughable peculiarities of manner or costume. He cannot, as Burns often does, exhibit his humble characters dramatically, does not laugh and sing, much less drink with his peasants. As Coleridge has said his 'sympathy for man as man is that of a contemplator rather than that of a fellow-sufferer or co-mate.' In fact, it is the moral or the spiritual part of man which he most sees and feels, and things are interesting chiefly as they affect this.

In setting forth such characters as *The Brothers*, *Michael*, *the Cumberland Beggar*, &c., he lets us see them in their relations to those unseen laws of the moral world, of which they themselves may be unaware, but which they suggest to the inspired insight of the poet. And in this way the emotions called forth by the sight of suffering do not end in mere emotion, but strike into a more enduring, that is, a moral ground, and so are idealized and relieved.—*Shairp*.

#### § 10. WORDSWORTH, THE POET OF NATURE.

What is meant by the term '*Nature*'? The term has a double meaning:—

(a) In its ordinary acceptance the term *Nature* is synonymous with the phenomenal world or the world which appears to our senses—the sum-total of physical or material

things—everything in the world except God and other spiritual beings—a conglomerate of dead objects.

(b) But the term may also include in its signification the energy or principle which underlies the phenomenal and material world and which gives unity and connexion to its phenomena.

The Schoolmen gave two different names to these two aspects of Nature. They called Nature as the sum-total of, finite, created things and their phenomenal manifestations, *Natura Naturata*, and the indwelling principle of nature *Natura Naturans*. The term 'Nature' should properly denote both these aspects of Nature and we should view Nature as *the perceptible universe sustained by an ordering intelligence*.

What is meant by a *Poet of Nature*? We apply this term to those poets in whose writing Nature holds a prominent place. All poets differ from scientists in their view of Nature. The scientist views Nature as an object of analysis and dissection. Nature appeals to him chiefly through his intellect. But the poet approaches Nature with a reverent spirit and views her through the medium of the feelings. Still there is the widest difference among poets in their interpretation of Nature. There are mainly two types of Nature-poetry :

(a) The *sensuous* type, which revels in describing to the senses the external colours and forms of Nature, which delights in a description of Nature's outward beauty, e. g., the poetry of Keats who is a distinguished *painter* of Nature.

(b) The *reflective* type, which does not merely paint Nature but loves to look upon her face as the index of her soul, and strives to penetrate into her inner significance. To this type belongs Wordsworth's poetry.

What, then, is meant by saying that Wordsworth is the '*poet of Nature*' ?

Pope and his contemporaries had held that the "proper study of mankind is man." If they treated of Nature at all, it was without sympathy, with little genuine observation, and an entire lack of any knowledge of her meaning. A few men tried to bring about a change; Cowper even achieving his memorable line,

"God made the country, and man made the town."

Yet Wordsworth was the first to speak of Nature as a living organism, and to treat of her influence on the minds of men. Mr. Morley has said that Wordsworth's greatness as a poet rests chiefly upon the wonderful insight and force with which he glorifies the universe, "and then makes of it not a theatre on which men play their parts, but an animate presence, intermingling with our works, pouring its companionable spirit about us, and breathing grandeur upon the very humblest face of human life."

What are the salient features of Wordsworth's Nature-Philosophy?

(1) Nature is not a dead mechanism but an animate presence, i. e., an organism sustained and worked by an indwelling spirit or power which holds together and gives order and beauty to the phenomena of the universe. Nature has a life or energy of her own. Hence even inanimate things, plants and flowers, are endowed with consciousness or feeling:—

"It is my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes.  
The budding twigs spread out their fan,  
To catch the breezy air,  
And I must think, do all I can,  
That there was pleasure there." (See App. B.)

(2) Nature's soul is not a mere reflection or a fancied mirror of the human soul, but a distinct centre of emanations, a living, sustaining spirit with which the human soul

communes. Wordsworth laid special stress on the fact that Nature was ready to give much which many were unwilling or unable to receive,\* though she will reciprocate to observing eye and an opening heart.

(3) The influence of Nature upon man is deep and real :—

(a) The *calm* of Nature tranquillises the human soul—the sweet “Daisy” repairs the troubled spirit, the distant mountain peak

“Often seems to send  
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.”

—(*Wordsworth Peak*.)

(b) The *sublimity* of Nature elevates the human soul.—

“And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts.” (*Tintern Abbey*.)

(c) Nature supplies both “law and impulse” to her darlings—she shows the way to virtue. Nothing can be more lovely and true than the poem commencing “Three years she grew,” where the insensible influence of Nature in moulding a beautiful innocent young girl’s character is celebrated in sweet song.

(d) This influence extends even to the moulding of the physical form of a human being to approach Nature’s beauty.

“Beauty born of murmuring sound  
Shall pass into her face.”

(e) Man and Nature are regarded as sympathetic towards each other, because God is present in both.

(4) Let us now notice the *optimism* in Wordsworth’s view of Nature. Nature has two aspects. In one of these,

\*We find an example in the rude *Peter Bell* with his mind unawakened to Nature’s voice :—

“A primrose by a river’s brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more.”

she is the manifestation of beauty and goodness. In the beautiful flower, the babbling stream, the star-lit sky she appears as a *benign* power. But she has another aspect—a *cruel* one, when she manifests herself in the blighting lightning, in the destructive storm, in disease and death. It is to this aspect—of Nature, as the scene of unrelenting cruelty and oppression, of Nature “red in tooth and claw” that Wordsworth was almost blind.\* To him Nature is the symbol of beauty and joy. His thoughts but rarely ran into the pessimistic or gloomy strain of the following lines :—

“For Nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal ;  
The mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow\* speared by  
the shrike,

And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder  
and prey.”—Tennyson, *Maud*. \*

The next point which requires consideration is *Wordsworth's method in dealing with Nature*.

*First*, when he would place some particular landscape before the reader, he does not heap up an exhaustive enumeration of details. Only one or two of the most essential features are faithfully given, and then from these he passes at once to the sentiment, the genius of the place, that which gives it individually, and makes it this and no other place. See for example, the very few touches which serve to give us

\* “It is true that Nature has sides to which Wordsworth was not energetically alive—‘Nature red in tooth and claw.’ He was energetically alive to the blind and remorseless cruelties of life and the world. When in early spring he heard the blended notes of the birds and saw the budding twigs and primrose tufts, it grieves him amid such fair works of Nature to think ‘what man has made of man.’ As if Nature herself excluding the conscious doing of that portion of nature which is the human race, and excluding also Nature’s own share of making poor man, did not abound in ranking cruelties and horrors of her own.”—Morley. See *Lines written in Early Spring*.

a picture of the Daffodils fluttering and dancing in the breeze. There is the *margin of a bay* and along it stretches a long *line of golden flowers* ! That is all.

In that wonderful poem, 'What, are you stepping westward?' we find the poet spiritualizing so powerfully the familiar appearances and common facts of earth, adding, as he himself says :—

" The gleam.  
The light that never was, on sea or land,  
The consecration, and the poet's dream."

The ideal light which Wordsworth sheds is a true light. He emphasises the light in front and the gloom behind and then proceeds to draw out its inner meaning as suggesting a glorious journey heavenward.

*Secondly.* With this spiritualizing power Wordsworth combines another faculty--viz., a wonderful keenness and faithfulness of eye for the minutest facts of the outward world. The shy, subtle, delicate emotions, the ever-varying play of sweet evanescent expressions on the face of Nature, few have noted with the same loving fidelity. Who else would have noted the effect of a leaping trout, or of a raven's croak, in bringing out the solitariness of a mountain tarn ?—

" There sometimes doth a leaping fish  
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer ;  
The crags repeat the raven's croak  
In Symphony austere."

*Thirdly.* Hence it comes that all the moods of Nature are alike open to him ; every kind of country yields up to him its secrets. He is alike true whether in describing the boundless flats of Salisbury Plain, the dells of western Somersetshire, the fells and lakes of Cumberland or the pastoral quiet of the Border hills.

We conclude this section by answering the question *Whether Wordsworth was a Pantheist in his attitude towards Nature.*





## QUESTIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION.

1. What was Wordsworth's attitude towards the French Revolution? How did this attitude gradually change?

[He at first hailed the Revolution as the dawning of a new era of hope and liberty for man, but when it led to the excesses of the Reign of Terror his sensibility found a rude shock. His indignation is shown in the way in which he contrasts Rob Roy with Napoleon.]

2. What was Tennyson's attitude towards the same movement?

[It was one of distrust and opposition from the very beginning. According to him "the flashing heats of the frantic fury" retard men's progress towards liberty.]

3. Mention the leading traits of Wordsworth's character.

4. Compare Milton and Wordsworth as *men* and *poets*.

[Wordsworth differs from Milton in his relation to womanhood and childhood. The cynical contempt for women which runs through the *Samson Agonistes* is to be contrasted with the affection with which Wordsworth speaks of his wife and his sister. Milton's treatment of his daughters completely lacked that sympathy which shines so brightly through *Alice Fell* and *We are Seven*. In purity and elevation of life the two poets resemble each other. "Plain living and high thinking" was the guiding principle of both. In poetic genius Wordsworth lacked that epic power which has given us the *Paradise Lost*. But in *stateliness of rhythm* Wordsworth approaches Milton.]

5. Sum up the merits and defects of Wordsworth's poetry.

6. Compare the *Classical* and the *Romantic* schools of poetry.

7. What is meant by the "Lake School" of poets? Is the expression appropriate?

[The term is based upon an accidental resemblance, viz., that the poets Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey lived among the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland. But it loses sight of individuality—it ignores the fact that each of these poets had characteristics which did not belong to the others.]

8. State Wordsworth's poetical theory. How far has he followed them in his poems?

10. Describe Wordsworth's treatment of Man.

11. Is there any trace of Rousseau's influence in Wordsworth's poetry?

12. Is Wordsworth a *subjective poet*?

[Wordsworth is not a *subjective poet* in the sense that he projects his own feelings and fancies into the characters, he paints. They are real, objective, individual characters, e. g., the *Cumberland Beggar*, *Simon Lee the Huntsman*, &c.]

13. What are the leading points of Wordsworth's Nature-philosophy?

[(1) Nature has an indwelling spirit. (2) The spirit or Soul of Nature is not a mere fancied image of the human Soul;—it is a real Soul. (3) There is a constant sympathy between the human Soul and the Soul of Nature. (4) The result of this intercommunication is peace and joy to man.]

14. Compare Wordsworth's attitude towards Nature with Shelley's and Tennyson's.

[1. Nature has to Wordsworth a life of *thought* and to Shelley a spirit of *love*. To Tennyson it is a process of law including both. 2. Wordsworth had a passion for the bare, wild scenery of the rugged North. It is but rarely that

Tennyson paints scenes of savage grandeur. He like Cowper, loves the ordered quiet of rural life. It is in the scenery of the mill, the garden, the down, the harvest field, "the summer crisp with shining woods" that Tennyson most delights.

3. There is one aspect of Nature to which Wordsworth was not energetically alive,—'Nature red in tooth and claw'—the cruel aspect, which Tennyson observes in his poems.]

15. What is meant by Wordsworth's *Optimism*?

16. Characterise Wordsworth's poetical method.

[1. His avoidance of details in the description of scenes of Nature. In his *Daffodils*, for instance, he gives only the "margin of a bay" and a "host of daffodils." 2. His withdrawal from the scene described into his inner self to exhaust its meaning. In the beautiful poem "What, are you stepping westward?" he spiritualizes the scene and draws out its inner voicing.]

17. Estimate the value of Wordsworth's poetry in its relation to life.

\* [Wordsworth's mission, as he conceived it, was to console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, to feel, and therefore become more actively and securely virtuous. He expresses his conviction that his poetry "will co-operate with the benign tendencies of human nature and society, and will in its degree be efficacious in making men better, wiser and happier." (Cheerful wisdom, and a prevailing inward happiness belong to him, very stimulating and refreshing in these days when languor, pessimism, despondency and doubt have invaded so many hearts, and so much literature.—*Roden Noel*.)]

18. How can it be said that Wordsworth occupies a unique position among poets?

["Poetry should give us pleasure; and the pleasure that Wordsworth gives is the pleasure and grace of spring. It

is the breath of morning across the furrows, the christening of brake and copse, and weald in a bath of white blossom, the tumbling of lambs and colts new-foaled ; the tenderness of all young things throughout the world, rapt in innocence and wonder."

This is the secret of W., the thing which makes him "the most joy-bringing of English poets," "Joy in the widest commonalty spread" is the central article in his creed. For him both the world around and the world within preach, with rarely faltering voice, the possibility, the duty, the certainty of happiness. It is because he spent his life in teaching this, because so many learning it from him have experienced its very truth, that he has a unique position among poets.]

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# NOTES

## ON

### SELECTION FROM WORDSWORTH.

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#### THE LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

**Q. Give (a) the date and (b) the history of the poem.**

**A. (a).** The poem was composed in 1798 and published in the same year. **(b)** These lines were written while W. was sitting by the brook that runs down from the Comb, in which stands the village of Alfoxden, through the grounds of Alfoxden. It was a favourite resort of W.'s. It was a beautiful natural retreat. The brook murmured gently on. But when the poet revisited this spot after an interval of more than forty years, the interesting features of the scene, the waving trees of ivy, &c., were gone.

**St. 1. A thousand.....notes**—innumerable sounds, mingled together—the confused melody formed of the murmur of the brook, the rustle of the boughs, the carol of birds, &c. *Blended*—mixed. *A grove*—the holy-grove in Alfoxden dell, which was the favoured meeting-place of the poet and his friends. *Reclined*—in a leaning attitude, expressive of a pensive mood. *Sweet mood*—happy state of mind. *Pleasant thoughts*—impressions of Nature crowding in upon his mind in his happy mood of “wise passiveness,” a happy communion with Nature. *Sad thoughts*—reflections which made him sad. These reflections are given in the following stanza.

**Expl.**—This stanza is introductory to the others. The poet is allured by the various mingled notes of natural music in Alfoxden dell into a happy communion with Nature. This communion gives him a sense of the universal spirit of joy

pervading all Nature but brings also a train of painful thoughts into his mind.

St. 2. *Flair works*—beautiful operations, the orderly phenomena of Nature. *Link*—connect. **Human soul**—the soul of man, as opposed to the *soul of Nature*. Nature has behind her scenes a soul with which the human soul holds communion. *Through ... ran*—operated under, and gave unity and connection to, my bodily functions. **To ... ran**—Nature attuned my soul to her own soul. *Grieved*—pained. *Heart*—the seat of the feelings. **What ... man**—the disorder which men have introduced among themselves by their cruelty—the misery which man has brought upon himself by his wanton revolt against the kind plan of Nature. Of—"Man only mars kind Nature's plan"—Scott. And, in a different connexion,—“Men only disagree, of creatures rational”—Milton. The same is the theme of Burns's poem—"Man was made to mourn." Burns says:—

“Man's inhumanity to man  
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

**Expl.**—The universal joy and peace pervading Nature suggest to the poet a melancholy thought. The beauty of Nature's scenes unites the poet's soul with the soul which underlies the phenomena of Nature; and when he perceives the all-pervading beauty and harmony of Nature's works, he cannot but think how man only revolts against kind Nature's plan and brings wretchedness and misery upon himself. Nature's peace throws into bold relief man's strife. [There may be an allusion here to the excess of the French Revolutionists and the “soul-less life” which was led by many in England about this time (1798.)]

St. 3. *Primrose*—(Lit. *the first rose*, historically from M. E. *primerole*)—an early spring flower.

*Tuft*—clusters. *Sweet bower*—charming shady retreat. *Periwinkle*—a plant with blue flowers and trailing stems:

*Trailed*—Drew along. This is a good example of W's *close observation of Nature*. He notices her minute differences—the primrose grows in *tufts* and the periwinkle in *wreaths*.

*Faith*—Belief. **Every...breathes**—This is W.'s philosophy. He thinks that *every natural phenomenon has a soul underlying it*. To him the "meanest" wayside flower is endowed with a peculiar consciousness and capacity of feeling, pleasure or pain. Every thing in Nature, even a flower, is happy. The line illustrates *W.'s sympathy for vegetable life*. See Introduction, Text-book, xxxvi.

**Expl.**—In that charming sylvan arbour, the periwinkle drew its winding stems with garlands of rich, blue flowers through the clusters of primrose. The spontaneous, luxuriant beauty of these flowers convinced the poet that even the smallest flower has a consciousness and capacity of feeling. Nature has a life,—a life of peace and joy.

St. 4. *Hopped*—leaped or frisked about.

**Their ... measure**—I cannot fathom their thoughts, but of this I am sure, that every movement of theirs seemed to express their unbounded joy. *Thrill*—a gentle vibration or quivering sensation of pleasure pervading the whole system.

**Par.**—The birds showed their gaiety by their merry springs and sports. The poet could not fathom their hearts, but even their slightest motions conveyed unmistakably to him the idea that birds too enjoy themselves like human beings.

St. 5. *Twigs*—not only animate but inanimate Nature is permeated by a spirit of joy. **Spread...fan**—expanded themselves like fans to secure to themselves the largest amount of air, as if the twigs were conscious. *Fan*—Milton calls the leaves of trees "Aurora's fan" in P. L. Bk. XV. *Do all I can*—however much I may try to think otherwise. **Expl.**—Even the fresh-shooting young branches of trees betrayed unmistakable signs of consciousness by expanding themselves to get as much,

of the mild air as they could ; and the poet could not help thinking with all his efforts to the contrary that even these twigs enjoyed themselves.

ST. 5. *This belief*—the faith that all Nature, animate or inanimate, is pervaded by a spirit of joy. *Be...heaven*.—given to a man by God. W.'s love of Nature is almost a religion to him. **Nature's holy plan**—the sacred order of Nature founded upon a principle of universal happiness. *Lament*—Bewail. *What...man*—the misery which men have entailed upon themselves. **Expl.**—If this faith in a universal spirit of joy permeating all Nature be a heaven-born one, if it be true that all Nature, animate or inanimate, is organised upon the principle of making everything happy, the poet has every reason to bewail the misery which man has through his own blindness brought upon himself. The poet looks upon this perception of happiness in all the aspects of Nature as a revelation, a divine inspiration, and sets the orderly beauty and joy of Nature in pathetic contrast with the disorder and misery prevailing among men. For this men themselves are to blame, for they revolt against "kind Nature's plan."

**Q. What is the leading thought of these lines?**

A. All Nature animate and inanimate, is happy. It is only man that is unhappy. Man's misery is due to his own revolt against the kind plan of Nature. The rest of creation enjoys peace and happiness.

**Q. Does the poet deal with a similar theme anywhere else? A.** In his "Fountain"—

"The black bird amid leafy trees—  
The lark above the hill  
Let loose their carols when they please,  
Are quiet when they will.

... ..

But we are press'd by heavy laws, &c,"



**Q. Point out some of the characteristic thoughts of W. as they occur here.**

A. (1) Nature has a *soul*, or spirit with which the human soul communes. (2) Nature's spirit is a spirit of *joy*. (3) This belief in 'kind Nature's plan' is a *divine intuition*.

**Q. Give the moral of the poem.**

A. Civilisation forces men into a sort of artificial existence in which the natural and healthier pleasures of life are lost.

## THERE WAS A BOY.

**Q. Give the date and history of the poem.**

A. It was composed in Germany in 1789 and published in 1800. It was afterwards included in *The Prelude* (pub. 1850.) The Ms. of the poem was sent to Coleridge who wrote on Dec. 10, 1798 that the lines had given him great pleasure. It is in the author's own words "an extract from the poem on" his "own poetical education."

**Q. Give the realistic ground-work of the poem.**

A. The poet describes how one of his school-fellows (William Raincock who died at an early age) used to go down to Windermere Lake, and there excite the owls by imitating their hooting; how, during intervals of silence, natural influences made an almost unconscious impression upon his mind.

I. 1. *A boy*—William Raincock was W.'s school-fellow at Hawkshead, and was with him also at Cambridge, where he was second Wrangler in 1790. *Cliffs*—high, steep rocks.  
2. *Islands*—Sax. 'igland'—eyeland, the land which appears in ocean like an eye in the face. *Winander*—Windermere,

the largest of the English lakes, is a contraction of *Winandermere*. The Lake-district, Cumberland, Lancashire and Westmoreland, is inseparably associated with W. and his friends.

3. *Earliest*—appearing first on the sky. 4. *Move along* &c.

—seeming to glide gently above the peaks of the hills. Note

*W.'s skill in the use of prepositions*. 6. *Glimmering*—shining

faintly in the dim twilight. 1--6. **Par.**—I knew a boy who

used to frequent the hills and islands of Windermere. The

cliffs and islets were his familiar haunts. As the shades of

evening fell, and the first stars began to appear above the

hill-tops, some rising and some setting, the boy would stand

in the solitude, under the trees or on the bank of the faintly

glittering lake. 7. *Interwoven*—passed through one another to

make a texture-like combination. 9. *Uplifted*—raised. 10

*Blow* &c.—imitated the cry of the owl. *Silent*—not hooting.

11. *Answer him*—respond to his cries by their hootings. 7--11.

**Par.**—In the solitude of the woods or on the banks of the

lake, the boy used to join his palms together and putting his

joined hands together to his mouth, imitate the cries of owls,

as if through a musical instrument, to induce the owls to

respond to him by their hootings. 12. *Watery vale*—valley,

or low ground between hills, in which there are sheets of water.

13. *Responsive* *to*—in reply to. *Quivering*—Tremulous.

*Peals*—successions of loud sounds. 14. *Halloos*—shouts.

15. **Concourse wild**—a confusion of irregular notes. *Con-*

*course*—lit., a running together. 16. *Jocund*—lively, merry.

*Dim*—a stunning clamour. 11--16. **Par.**—The owls, till

then silent, would hoot in answer to his mimic cries, across the

waters of the hill-bounded lake. Their repeated and prolonged

cries would be perpetuated by the successive echoes from the

cliffs, thus producing a strange, confused combination of noise

and merriment. 16—17. **Expl.**—Sometimes again, it happened that his utmost efforts to induce the owls to return his mimic hootings would fail to draw an answer from them, *i. e.*, sometimes the owls would remain obstinately silent inspite of his most successful imitation of their cries—there were intervals of silence on the part of the owls which the most skilful imitation of their hootings would not induce them to break. 18. **Hung**--waited in suspense for an answer. Notice how the *sound of this line echoes the sense*—the regular pauses repeated at intervals expressing the idea of suspense :—

Then—sometimes—in that silence—as he hung—listening.  
19. **Gentle...surprise**—A sudden impression dawning gently upon his mind. 20. *Far...spirit*—into his inmost heart. *Voices*—the message of Nature ; what Nature expresses. 18—21. **Expl.**—When the thoughts of the boy were intent upon the hootings of the owls,—while he was listening in an attitude of attentive expectation for the owl's cry, the influence of nature through the roar of cataracts, suddenly dawned upon his mind like a new revelation, an unexpected intuition. 22. *Unawares*--without his knowledge, unconsciously. 23. *Solemn*—awe-inspiring. *Imagery*—collection of images or features.

24. **Uncertain...heaven**—the sky with its changing appearances. Mr. Webb explains 'uncertain' to mean 'vague, and indistinct in the twilight.' *Received into*—reflected in. 25. *Bosom*—surface. *Steady*—still and unchanging. 21—5. **Expl.**—While he listened in silence for the answering call of the owls, the beautiful features of the landscape around him, the rocks, the woods, the changing sky reflected on the still waters of the calm lake below, would in an imperceptible way make an impression upon his mind—He would be roused to a

consciousness of the power behind all nature, - of

"Gleams like the flashing of a shield ; the earth  
And common face of Nature spoke to him  
Rememberable things."—*The Prelude*, 583, et seq.

26. *Taken, &c.* - was received into heaven, died. *Mates* - companions. 26-7. **Par.** - A Nature's child like the boy could not live long. His companions lost him before he was twelve. 29. *Hung upon* - was suspended above. See T. N. 30. "The school at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, was in W.'s mind. 'Our school stood in the churchyard, and we had frequent opportunities of seeing what was going on there.' He stayed there until he was nine." - Turner. 31. *Led* - conducted (me) 33. **Long** - i. e., he stayed the full length of the time. *Together* - on one and the same occasion. 34. *Mute* - silently. 29-34. **Par.** - The boy was buried in the grass-grown churchyard on the hill-side above the village school, overlooking the beautiful valley in which he was born ; and when in the evening I had to pass through the churchyard I used to stand in silence for half-an-hour at the same time looking at the grave in which he is buried.

**Q. What is the poem an illustration of?**

A. W.'s power of lifting from so commonplace a theme as that of a boy whistling through his fingers, a beautiful poem. As Hutton says - "For real lovers of W. these lines have effected more in helping them adequately to imagine the full depth of the human imagination, and to feel the inexhaustible wealth of Nature's symbols, than any magnificence of storms, or ship-wreck or Alpine solitude" - *Essays*.

**Q. What does the qualifying clause 'I believe' in l. 32 show?**

A. It illustrates at once a power and a weakness—the

power of the poet's love of truth and the weakness of a self-possession which often leads him into dry details.

## NUTTING.

**Q. Give the date of the poem.**

**A.** Written in Germany in 1799, and published in 1800.

**Q. Explain the reference in the poem.**

**A.** The poet refers to his school-days at Hawkshead, when he "was an impassioned Nutter." He used to go nutting in the extensive coppice woods stretching from the side of Esthwaite Lake towards Graythwaite, the seat of the ancient family of Sandys. He describes how he would sally out in a ragged costume and feel delighted at finding an untouched nook, in which he would linger for sometime, then plunder the trees of their nuts, until he felt ashamed at the ravages he wrought in the presence of the "spirit" that there is "in the woods."

1. *It seems*—By the force of imagination the poet transfers himself to one of the "summer days" of childhood and seems to enjoy afresh the experiences which made such a deep impression upon his mind. *Die*—i. e., be forgotten. 2. *I...out*—I speak of one day selected from a number of similar ones. 3. **Heavenly...die**—days of exquisite pleasure which cannot be forgotten. *Heavenly*—of uncommon happiness. 4. *Eagerness...hope*—the joyous expectation (of gathering nuts) characteristic of boys (who are more sanguine than grown-up men.) 5. *Cottage, &c.*—his boarding-house at Hawkshead. *Threshold*—lit. the *wold* or piece of wood,<sup>y</sup> which is *threshed* or trodden under foot. *Sallying forth*—<sup>is</sup>issuing out. 6. **Huge wallet**—a large bag for carrying nuts. *Wallet*—properly, a bag for carrying

the necessities of a journey *Slung*—Hung. 7. *Nutting crook*—a bent stick for drawing down the branches of the nut-trees.

8. *Quaint figure*—an oddly dressed form. **Quaint.** (*Le complot*, neat, adorned), hence artificial, odd. "Coit—quant, neat, fine, spruce, smug, trim, tricked up" (Cotgrave. *Dictionary*.) 9. **Tricked out**—dressed up finely, in a quaint fashion. *Trick out*—adorn fantastically. **Proud disguise**—splendid fantastic dress. *Cast-off*—old and rejected. **Wæds**—garments. The word is now restricted to a widow's mourning dress. 10. *For &c.*—to be used for the purpose of nutting. **Husbanded**—saved up. *Husband*—is to use with economy. 11. *Exhortation*—appealing advice. *Frujal*—economical, saving. *Dame*—the woman in charge of the house at which W. boarded during the time that he was a pupil at Hawkshead—her name was Anne Tyson. 1 - 11. **Par.**—My mind goes back to one of those happy days, one out of many, the memory of which cannot be lost, when, with the joyous expectation of a boy, I started from our cottage on a nutting expedition to the distant woods with a large bag to contain nuts hung over my shoulders and a bent stick in my hand. I must have been a curious sight, fantastically dressed in old, worn-out clothes, saved by the earnest directions of my thrifty dame. 12. **Motley**—variegated in colour, dappled: hence applied to the dress of professional fools. Domestic fools of the great formerly wore a parti-coloured coat. Hence, in Shakespeare, Lear says, "A worthy fool, *motley's* your only wear." (Fr. *mattele*) curdled milk, hence anything *spotted* like curdled milk. **Accoutrement**—dress, equipment. A word naturalised from the French. *Of...At*—which could afford to despise or defy. They were so ragged that they feared no injury from thorns and thickets—they could not be made more ragged.

13. *Brakes*—thickets, places overgrown with brambles.

*Brambles*—rough, prickly shrubs. 14. *More...was*—worse than was absolutely necessary. I could afford to wear better clothes. 15. *Pathless*—having no beaten way, untrodden. *Forced*—with difficulty and labour managed to pass through the brakes. 16. *Dear*—welcome, precious, tempting. *Nook*—recess, a retreat. 17. *Unvisited* by nutters. 18. *Drooped*—Hung down. *Ungracious*—cruel. 19. *Devastation*—desolation. *Hazel*—a tree producing nuts of a light-brown colour. 20. *Tempting*—attractive. *Clusters*—bunches of nuts. 21. **Virgin scene**—a place untouched by nutters. *Virgin*—unsullied, undefiled, fresh. Cf. 'Virgin soil' which means soil which has not been tilled. (14-24)—**Par.**—With difficulty and labour I made my way through the thickets and over the rocks, to a tempting shady retreat not yet touched by the ravaging hand of nutters, where there were none of those broken branches and withered leaves which mark the rapine wrought by nutters. There the tall, straight hazel trees stood erect, covered with inviting clusters of nuts. The whole scene was one into which the ravages of nutters had not found their way. 22. **Suppression of the heart**—repression of the feelings, the heart being the seat of the feelings. 21-23. **Expl.**—I stood before the virgin scene in a contemplative attitude, scarcely able to breathe through sheer delight. I repressed my feelings and yielded myself to a calm enjoyment of the scene. True joy is inconsistent with an uncontrolled outburst of feelings. 23. *Wise restraint*—control of the feelings which wisdom dictates, for such a control promotes real enjoyment. 24. **Voluptuous**—yielding to the pleasures of the senses. *Eyed*—~~glazed~~ gazed at. 25. *Banquet*—a feast, a rich treat or enjoyment. 21-25.—**Expl.**—I stood for a time calmly before this tempting scene, hardly able to repress the first

outburst of delight ; and knowing that I had no rival nutter to fear, controlled my wild eagerness, that I might prolong my-pleasure, and gazed wistfully at the rich feast that was spread before me. Instead of proceeding at once to satisfy my eagerness to enjoy the feast, I spent some time in a quiet contemplation of the scene 27- -*Temper*—disposition of mind ; mood 28. *Weary*—tedious. *Blest*—rewarded. 25-9. **Expl.**—The poet here refers to that familiar mood in which the mind being sure of the realisation of a long-cherished hope, turns to other sources of pleasure. When the poet was sure of the banquet spread before him, he would sit down and amuse himself with the flowers under the trees, like many other persons who have met with unexpected success after long and tedious waiting. 30. *Bower*—a shady recess, an arbour. 31. *Five seasons*—indefinite, for a large number of years. 30-2. **Expl.**—The shady retreat in which the poet found himself was so secluded that it might have been unvisited by any human being for years together. 33. **Fairy**—(O. Fr. *faerie*, enchantment) *miniature* ; Cf. “Fairy palms”—Tennyson, *Aylmer's Field*. And, “Many a fairy fore-land”—*The Brook*. 45. **Waterbreaks**—ripples or eddies, formed by ledges of rocks breaking the course of the stream, which foams and murmurs over them. Cf. “Silver *water-break*”—Tennyson, *The Brook*. *Murmur on*—flow on with a purling sound. 30-4. **Par.**—It was a charming arbour where sweet violets bloomed and faded under the leafy canopy, year by year, without any one to see them, where charming rivulets babbled over rocky ledges for ever. 34. *Sparkling*—glittering. 35. *Green*—covered with a mossy coat. 36. **Fleeced**—covered with moss as a sheep is with its wool. Scattered stones in Wiltshire are called ‘grey wethers.’ 35-7.—**Expl.**—The



stones scattered about the place are compared to sheep. As a sheep is covered with its woolly coat, so the boulders are covered with moss. 38. The line is an illustration of 'sound echoing the sense.' The large number of liquid consonants, and the alliterative repetition (so often an artistic device with Tennyson) imitate the murmuring stream of water. 39. *Sweet mood*—charming frame of mind. *Pleasure*—active enjoyment. *Loves*—is willing. 40. *To pay tribute*—to subordinate itself to. *Ease*—quiet, passive, indolent pleasure, *dolce far niente*, sweet doing nothing. 38-40. **Expl.**—While the poet lay in the shade of the trees, with his head resting on one of the mossy stones scattered about the place, watching the glitter of the foams, and listening to the murmur of the brooks, he would enjoy that mood in which ease or passive enjoyment is a stronger impulse than pleasure or active enjoyment, when instead of yielding to the rapture of active delight (the enjoyment of nutting) the mind loves to enjoy passive contemplation (of the scene around). 40. *Secure*—qualifies *heart*;—confident (lit *sine cura*, without care or anxiety.) 41. **Luxuriates**—indulges to excess, (generally followed by *in*). **Indifferent**—common, not calculated to excite any special interest. 42. *Wasting*—frittering its affections. Cf. *Elegy*,—"Waste its sweetness in the desert air." *Kindliness*—geniality, softness. **Stocks and stones**—indifferent objects. The phrase is used in connection with idolatry in the Bible (*Jeremiah*, iii. 9) and by Milton :—"When all our fathers worshipped *stocks and stones*." *Vacant*—empty of interesting objects. 40-2. **Expl.**—The poet enjoyed that charming mood in which the heart, being sure of its source of enjoyment, is willing to amuse itself temporarily with things for which it does not care, with extraneous objects, "*stocks and stones*." The boy, knowing that the delight of

gathering the nuts was assured to him, allowed his mind to wander away to indifferent objects. He did not mind spending a little time in playing with the flowers and dreaming on the babbling brook, the mossy stones. 43. *Up*—Notice the sudden outburst of boyish eagerness, expressed by the change of sense and rhythm. 44. *Crash*—The loud, mingled sound, as of many things falling and breaking at once. 45. *Merciless ravage*—cruel havoc. *Ravage*—Devastation. 47. *Deformed*—spoiled, mutilated. *Sullied*—defiled, no longer virgin. **Patiently, &c.**—quietly yielded themselves to the ravaging hand of the nutcracker. As a victim meekly gives itself up to the executioner, so the hazel-branches submissively bent themselves to the will of the nutcracker. *This is another example of Wordsworth's attribution of human feelings to inanimate objects. It is W.'s sincere belief that natural objects have a life of their own. This idea has been already expressed in his Lines written in Early Spring. Being—existence, the quiet undisturbed existence which they had hitherto led. (43-45.)* **Par.**—All at once, boyish eagerness got the better of his poetic feelings, and he began to spread desolation among the branches of the hazel-trees, until the whole virgin scene became shorn of beauty and grace. The boughs seemed to yield themselves pliantly to the destructive operations of the cruel nutcracker. 48. *Unless, I &c.*—This introduction of personality into his poems is, we have seen (*"There was a boy,"* l. 32), a source of both power and weakness in Wordsworth. Unless I confuse my present feelings with those I then had; unless I colour my past feelings with the present. 51. *Exulting*—with a sense of triumph. *Lit. leaping for joy*—feeling rapturous delight. 51. *Rich, &c.*,—laden with nuts which in the boy's opinion, were more precious than the treasures of kings. 52. *Sense of pain*—feeling of remorse at having caused

so much desolation among the nut-trees. Says Prof. Reed :—  
 “The eagerness of his hope, the luxury of animal delight are vividly remembered, but not more so than the rapid transition of feeling,—one of those sudden reactions common to the quick heart of childhood, which rises from its unexpected sense of pain to an exquisite sympathy by which imagination spiritualizes the insensate world of Nature.”  
 —*Lectures on the British Poets.* 53. **Silent**—not complaining. Their very silence, their mute passivity, seemed a reproach to the poet. *Intruding*—peeping in, through the gaps made among the thick leafy branches. 48-53. **Par.**—If I give a true description of my state of mind after my nutting expedition, when laden with treasures which I would not have exchanged for the precious wealth of a king, I proudly departed from the scene of havoc which I had caused I began to feel the sting of remorse. The mute, uncomplaining trees and the gaps which I had made among their leafy branches and through which sun-light streamed in, seemed to reproach me by their very silence. 54. *Dearest maiden*—his sister ‘Dorothy. *Shades*—shady spots. 55. *In gentleness of heart*—with feelings of affection and reverence, opp. to the cruel disposition of the nutter. 86. **There...woods**—a divine spirit pervades all things in Nature.

Q. Explain fully—*There...woods.*

A. The poet has drawn philosophical lessons from his own childish memories. After the nutting expedition he found himself in one of these moments when “we see into the life of things,”—when the face of Nature sends to us “gleams like the flashing of a shield.” The innocent rapine of *nutting* taught him to feel that there is in the woods an indwelling principle,—an immanent spirit—a presence which too rude a touch

of ours will desecrate and destroy. Hence he advises his sister Dorothy to move among these shady scenes with a reverent heart caring "not lightly" to "violate the grace the lowliest flower possesses in its place," for even the woods have a claim to our reverence.

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LUCY.

I.

**Q. Give the date and history of the poems on "Lucy."**

*A.* The "Lucy" poems were composed at Goslar, in Germany, in 1799. The first and third of these poems were published in 1800, the second being first published in 1807.

**Q. Who was "Lucy," the subject of these poems?**

*A.* Lucy is apparently a country-girl, the creation of the poet's imagination. Of the history of that emotion the memory of which prompted the lines on "Lucy" Wordsworth has told us nothing; and we should not wish to learn the secret, for, says Myers, "it is best to leave the sanctuary of all hearts inviolate, and to respect the reserve not only of the living but of the dead." Of this reserve we have an indication in the fact that the second of these poems was published seven years after its composition.

1. *Untrodden ways*—unfrequented paths. *Among &c.*—in a lonely place. 2. *Dove*—a small river rising in the hilly district of Derbyshire, where very few people live. 3. *Praise*—admire. She had no admirers, for she dwelt in a lonely, sequestered place. **St. 1.—Par.**—*The poet describes the locality of Lucy's home.* She lived in the secluded district by the side of the small Derbyshire river (the Dove)—where there

was none to admire her beauty and were very few to love her none capable of understanding her real worth.

5. *A violet &c.*—the sweet-scented violet which loves to blossom in shady, out-of-the-way places, almost hidden from human view. 7. **Only one**—when a single star shines without a rival in the sky, it looks very beautiful. So was Lucy. **St. 2.—Par.**—*The poet describes Lucy's beauty.* She was as beautiful and modest as a sweet violet which blooms in concealed nooks, perhaps by a moss-covered stone, and almost hides itself from human view. She was also as fair as a solitary star shining in peerless beauty in the sky. She was the only beautiful object in the secluded spot by the quiet river. 11. *Ceased &c.*—died. 12. *O !...me !*—How different is life to me now that Lucy is dead. Cf.—Milton's lament over the death of his friend—

“But, oh! the heavy change now thou art gone.”—*Lycidas*. **St. 3.—Par.**—*The poet describes how Lucy's death has affected him.* Lucy died obscure. She had so few friends that her death was unknown to others. But the difference made by her death in the poet's life is great. Her death has deeply affected him.

**Q. What is the leading thought of these lines?**

A. “Fame cannot make love more sweet, or death more bitter.”—*Peterson*.



## II.

**Q. Give the argument of the second part.**

A. “It was not till he left England that the poet knew the strength of his love of country and the nature of the feeling as rooted in the domestic affections.”—*Peterson*.

13. *Among unknown men*—In Nov. 1791 W. landed in France to realise his ideal of liberty through the Fr. Revolu-

tion. He passed through revolutionized Paris with satisfaction and sympathy, and proceeded first to Orleans, and then to Blois. He returned to Paris in Oct. 1792. He came back to England at the close of 1792. After the publication of his *Lines above Tintern Abbey* W. with his sister went to Germany and passed the winter at Goslar, where these lines on "Lucy" were composed. (13—16.)—**Par.**—It was only after the

poet had travelled in France and Germany that he came to recognise the great love he bore to England.

17 **Melancholy dream**—the sad project of realising liberty by joining in the revolutionary movement in France. W. was on the point of putting himself forward as a leader of the Girondist party, in the conviction that his single heartedness of aim would make him a point round which the confused instincts of the multitude might not impossibly rally. But his funds were stopped, and he had to go back to England, thus being saved from the guillotine. *Dream*—the hope of finding liberty in a foreign land is a vision. 17—13.—**Par.**—That wild hope of realising my views on liberty which led me to think that the French Revolution was big with hopes for mankind, and tempted me to leave England, is now given up; I shall never leave England, for my love of the country becomes more intense than ever. 21 *Among the mountain*—in the secluded hilly tracts of England and not in the heated atmosphere of France, amid the brawls of ruthless factions. 22. *The joy &c.*—The delight of attaining true happiness. 23. *She*—Lucy. *Cherished*—whose love I treasured. *Wheel*—the hand spinning-wheel. As a country-girl, Lucy spent much of her time in spinning, which was thought part of a woman's duty. 21—4. **Par.**—Not in the cruel, blood-tainted atmosphere of Paris, but in the fair

and serene hill-tracts of England did I find my true happiness, for Lucy whose love I dearly enshrined in my heart, devoted her time to the modest occupation spinning in an English home. The poet means to say that *his love of country was intensified by his love of Lucy*. 25. *Concealed*—hid in darkness. 25—3.—**Expl**—*The poet accounts for his reviving patriotism* His love of Lucy has consecrated every English scene. The mornings revealed, the nights hid, the arbours which were the favourite resorts of Lucy, and one of the green fields of England was the one which Lucy last saw before her eyes were closed in death. It is by their association with Lucy's life that English scenes have this charm for the poet.

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### III.

29. **Slumber**—insensibility to the ordinary events of nature, *e. g.* that life terminates in death. *Spirits*—mind's eye, *Seal*—close. **Expl**.—As sleep closes the physical eye to external nature, so my excessive love for Lucy made me indifferent to the ordinary course of events—I did not fear that she would ever die. 30. **Human fears**—such fears as all human beings have viz., that death is the inevitable termination of life. 31. *Feel*—suffer from. 32. *Touch*—dostroying effect. *Feel* &c.—*i. e.*, grow old. 29—32. **Expl**.—Living in the dream-land of love the poet became insensible to the stern realities of life—the fact that death is the inseparable accompaniment of life—he did not fear that a fair and young girl like Lucy would ever die. To him the girl seemed to live beyond the reach of Time's ravaging effect—he could not believe that she would ever grow old. Cf.—

"If I had thought thou couldst have died,  
I might not weep for thee !  
But I forgot, when by thy side,  
That thou couldst mortal be." — Wolfe.

33. *Now—i. e.*, after her death. 35. *Rolled*—in her grave. *Earth's...course*—the daily rotation of the earth. 36. *Stocks &c.*—the insensate objects of Nature. 33—6.—**Expl.** — The poet brings out a contrast between Lucy's beautiful youth which sealed his eyes to the possibility of death, and her death in which she is a part of the beauty of the inanimate world. Now that she is dead she has neither sensibility nor motion. The only motion that she now has in her grave, is in common with that of the insensate objects of Nature, the rocks, stones and trees. She has now formed part of the beauty and grandeur of Nature—the rotating globe of the earth.

**Q. Give the argument of the third part.**

A. "In his desolation the poet remembers how she whom he mourns had seemed to him, while yet alive, to be a thing not born for death. 'His had been the relish in the power of unreflecting love.'"—Peterson.

**Q. Sum up the characteristics of the poems on Lucy.**

A. They are an example of W.'s *simple style and simple ideas*. Wordsworth was the exponent and extreme type of that reaction which set in at the beginning of the 19th century against the artificial poetry of the 18th. W. taught that the subjects of poetry should be drawn from the simplest incidents of life and the commonest phenomena of Nature and the language should be simple and natural. "Through none of his poems" says Myers, "has the *peculiar loveliness of English scenery* and *English girlhood* shone more delicately than through those which came to him as he paced the frozen gardens of that desolate city (Goslar)."



## HART-LEAP WELL.

### Q. Give the history of the poem.

A. It was written at Town-end, Grasmere, in 1800, and published in the same year. The first eight stanzas were composed extempore one winter evening in the cottage when the poet was tired with labouring at an awkward passage in "The Borderers." The poet and his sister had passed the place in their wild winter journey from Sockburn to Grasmere in Dec. 1799. A peasant whom they met near the spot told them the story about the name of the Well and the Hart and pointed out the stones.

### Q. Describe the locality of Hart-leap Well.

A. 'Hart-leap Well,' the subject of W.'s poem, is a small spring of water, about three and-a-half miles from Richmond, in Yorkshire, situated on the roadside leading from Richmond to Askrigg. It is barren moor for miles around. The water still falls into the 'cup of stone' which appeared to be very long standing.

1. *The Knight*—Sir Walter who had started on a chase. *Wensley Moor*—a village in Yorkshire. 2. *Slow &c.*—ridding slowly like a summer cloud. W. is fond of *cloud-similes*. See T. N. 3. *Vassal*—(A feudal term) one who holds land of a superior, and who vows fidelity and homage to him: **St. 1.—Par**—Sir Walter on a hunting expedition out-distanced his followers. Two of his horses fell down dead, and when after a slow ride like the motion of a summer cloud he came near the house of one of his vassals he ordered aloud another horse to be brought for him. 6. *Comely*—(from *come* in the sense of *become*, to suit)—well-proportioned, handsome, graceful. 7. *He &c.*—This was the third horse that he was riding during the day.

8. *Glory*—accompanied with the pomp and circumstance of the chase. **St. 2.—Par.**—The vassal heard his loud command, and saddled his best horse, a handsome grey one, and Sir Walter bestrode him. This was the third horse that he rode in the course of the day's hunt. 9. *Sparkled*—glittered. **Prancing**—(akin to *prank*) High-mettled. *Courser*—a spirited horse, a racer. 11. **Falcon**—a kind of bird, usually trained to the pursuit of other birds or game. 12. *Doleful*—sorrowful, woeful, melancholy. **St. 3.—Par.**—The spirited horse showed his eagerness to join the chase by the glitter in his eyes. Both the horse and rider were happy and Sir Walter again pursued the game with falcon-like speed but the whole atmosphere around was hushed in dismal silence. 13. **Rout**—(Lat. *rupta*, broken) a scattered multitude, a crowd. *Hall*—a manor-house, so called because in it courts were formerly held. 14. *Galloped*—rode with speed. **St. 4.—Par.**—This morning a large crowd had started on this hunting expedition, and the sound made by the hoofs of their galloping steeds was returned in loud echoes. But soon Sir Walter and his horse both vanished from the view of the rest. He alone chased a deer and the pursuit was so hot that the like of it had never been seen before. 17. *Restless*—continually moving. **Veering**—constantly changing. 20. **Weary**—An epithet transferred from the dogs to the mountain. *Strain*—climb with violent effort. **St. 5.—Par.**—Continually moving like an ever-shifting wind, Sir Walter calls to him the few wild dogs yet remaining (the rest having succumbed to the effort of the chase). Responsive to his call, three dogs, the best of their species, follow him and climb up the mountain with painful effort. 21. **Halloed**—called out to the dogs by name. *Chid*

...on—scolded them to continue the pursuit. 22. *Suppliant gestures*—motions expressive of entreaty. *Stern upbraiding*—severe reproof. 23. *But...foul*—but, they pant or gasp for breath and become blind. 24. *Stretched*—fell down dead.

*Fern*—A kind of plants, growing in humid soil. **St. 6. Par.**—Sir Walter loudly called to his dogs by name, and urged them to continue the pursuit, sometimes by coaxing motions and sometimes again by severe scolding. But his efforts were vain, for the dogs panted and became blind, and one after the other, they fell down dead among the mountain shrubs.

25. *Throng*—crowd. *Tumult*—clamour. *Race*.—chase.

26. *Blown*—sounded. 27. **This...chase—Expl.**—Such a chase as this in which Sir Walter alone pursues the deer has never been seen on earth. Hunting is usually a pastime in which many people join with hound and horn. A chase in which a single huntsman pursues the hart in a doleful solitude like this, suggests supernatural, unearthly associations. **St.**

**7. Par.**—*The poet contrasts the strange sequel of the chase with its pompous beginning.*—There are now no longer the clamorous multitude, the usual din of the chase. Sir Walter, single and alone, pursues the hunt in dismal solitude. Such an unusual pursuit has a weird, mysterious appearance. *Toils*—moves with labour. *By what &c.*—how he died.

**St. 8. Par.**—The deer, the object of this hot pursuit, is seen moving with difficulty along the side of the mountain but when the hunter goes up to his side he finds him lying dead. The poet will not say how he died after he was seen by the huntsman on the mountain side or in what way he died. It will be sufficient to say that he was found dead. 35.

*Cricketed*—produced a sharp sound like that of rending.

**St. 9. Par.**—He alighted from his horse and leaned against a

thorn in the solitude. He was alone, without any of his followers or dogs. He looked wistfully at his game in silence ; but he did not express his great joy in his movements—he did not crack his whip or sound his bugle. 38. *Dumb partner*—the mute animal (the horse) which had shared the hunt with him. *Feat*—exploit, great deed. 39. *The hour, &c.*—when it is just born. *Feared*—Brought forth. 40. *Cleaving*—piercing, driving fast. *Sleet*—partially melted snow. **St. 10. Par.**—Hard by the thorn against which Sir Walter was leaning in silent joy at the glorious success of the chase, stood his horse who had shared with him the glory of this exploit. He was as quiet as a new-born lamb and his neck was covered with foam as though with fast driving snow. 42. *Nostril*—Lit. the hole (*trill, drill*—bore) of the nose. 43. *Fetched*—Heaved. **St. 11. Par.**—The stag was lying dead at his side, with his nostril touching a spring under a hill and the surface of a spring was still thrilling with the cry of agony which he had sent forth in his last gasp of death. **St. 12. Par.**—Sir Walter's joy knew no bounds. He was so happy that he could not then enjoy rest or repose. He thought himself the happiest of mortals. He walked restlessly all over the place, and was never tired of looking at the place he began to love so much as making his victory. 50. *Sheer*—steep. See T. N. 51. *Several*—separate. 53. *Inprinted*—impressed, stamped. **St. 13. Par.**—having ascended at least 22 yards in a perpendicular height of rock Sir W. found three separate prints of the hart's hoofs impressed upon the grass-grown ground. 53. *Wiped his face*—wiped off from his face the perspiration due to the labour of the ascent. 55. *Lofty brow*—the high top. *Brow*—the edge of a precipice. **St. 14. Expl.**—Sir W. felt

the difficulty of ascent. He wiped his face and wondered how the whole height from the top of the rock to the fountain at its foot could have been passed by the stag in three bounds only—It was a strange sight for a mortal to see.

*Arbour*—a leafy bower, a shady retreat. *Rural joy*—rustic happiness. 59. *Shed*—a slight building. *Pilgrim*—from *peregrinus*, wandering. A wanderer, particularly one who goes to a distant place to visit a holy shrine. *Cot*—a hut

**St. 15. Par.**—Sir W. resolves to build there a pleasure-house and a bower of rustic comfort, which would give shelter to the way farer and to the pilgrim and be a resort of bashful maidens for love-making. 61. *Cunning*—skilful (A. S. *cunnan*, know). The word now implies deceit. 62. *Basin*—reservoir of water. *Dell*—hollow place. 63. *The same*—the fountain. **St. 16. Par.**—He will employ a skilful artist to make a circular reservoir for water round the spring, and see that whoever had occasion to refer to the fountain, should thenceforth call it *Hart-leap Well* in allusion to the three leaps made by the hart or stag before he reached the well where he died.

65. *Gallant*—Brave, intrepid. 66. *Monument*—anything that serves to perpetuate a memory. 67. *Several*—separate. *Rough-hewn*—roughly cut, unpolished. 68. *Planted*—fixed. *Grazed*—lightly touched. *Turf*—grass-grown surface of land.

**St. 17. Par.**—And, brave hart, to let people know how much you deserve praise I shall cause three separate pillars to be fixed on the three spots where your hoofs lightly touched the sod, to perpetuate the memory of your intrepidity.

69. *Days are long*—Summer days are proverbially long. 70. *Paramour*—mistress. See T. N. The lord is a pleasure-seeker. 71. *Minstrel*—lit. one who ministered to the amusement of the rich by music or jesting; a musician. 72. *Make*

*merry*—enjoy mirth. **St. 18. Par.**—The lord resolves to spend the long days of summer in a round of pleasure in that charming bower. 73. *Fail*—Give way. 74. *Mansion*—a dwelling-house, esp. one of palatial size. *Endure*—last. 75. *Joy*—object of joy. *Till*—cultivate. *Swale* and *Ure*—two tributaries of the Ouse. **St. 19. Par.**—The pleasure-house with its sylvan bower will last as long as the mountains stand firm. It will give delight to the cultivators of the fields by the Swale and the dwellers in the woods of the Ure. 77. *Stone-dead*—dead as a stone, stiff in death. *Ring*—resound. **St. 20. Par.**—Sir Walter went home, leaving the stag stiff in death, stretched with his breathless nostrils touching the spring. The knight soon built a pleasure-house and an arbour on the spot and raised three rough-hewn pillars on the hoof-prints of the stag. The fame of this work spread to the remotest corners of the country around. 81. **Ere...steered**—before the moon had thrice ~~an~~ her full course, *i. e.*, before three months had rolled away. The moon is represented as making a voyage through the sky. *Port*—destination. *Steer*—direct a ship in its course. 82. *Cyp*—an artificial basin. *Living well*—flowing or running spring. 83. *Rude*—unpolished. *Reared*—raised. **St.—21. Par.**—Within three months' time Sir Walter caused a stone basin to be framed to receive the water of the running spring and raised three pillars of rough-hewn stone on the three hoof-prints and built a pleasure-house in the valley. 87. *Silva*—rustic, lit. woody (L. *Silva*, a wood) **St. 22. Par.**—Tall flowering plants were interwoven with winding creepers and trees to make a little rustic arbour near the fountain, a charming shady retreat screened from the roughness of the weather. **St. 22. Par.**—And Sir Walter, true to his resolve, spent in

this charming arbour, the long days of summer in gaiety, with song and dance. 94. *Paternal vale*—the valley in which his forefathers lie buried. 95. *Matter*—subject. *Second rhyme*—another song. 96. *Another tale*—a different account, how Nature sympathised with the death of the hart. **St. 24.**  
**Par.**—Sir Walter was in due time gathered to his fathers and buried in the same valley in which his ancestors lay buried. But there is a sequel to the story of the Hart-leap Well, there is another tale to be told and the poet will give it in the second part.

**Q. Give the story of Hart-leap Well.**

**A.** A Knight named Sir Walter left his manor-house with a large tumultuous crowd on a hunting expedition. Two of his horses died in the course of the chase of a hart. He soon out-distanced his followers and reached the hut of a ~~messal~~ who saddled for him another horse, the third that he rode during the day's hunt. Sir Walter "flew like a falcon" at the hart but there was a mournful silence in the air. He hallooed to his dogs, only three in number yet remaining, and climbed up a mountain. The dogs, panting and blinded, followed him. He came across the hart lying dead with his nostril touching a gushing spring beneath a hill. It was not known how the hart had died. Sir Walter climbed to the top of the hill—at least four roods of sheer ascent. He found three hoof-marks which the hunted beast had left imprinted on the grassy ground. Three leaps had borne him from the lofty brow of the hill down to the fountain at its foot, where he was lying dead. Sir Walter built a pleasure-house upon this spot and a charming arbour close to it. He caused a stone basin to be made round the fountain to receive its springing water. He also planted three pillars of rough-hewn stone upon the three spots where the hart's hoofs had grazed the turf.

## PART SECOND.

97. **Moving accident**—the touching chances of life. *Moving*—pathetic, adapted to excite feeling. *Accident*—the unforeseen occurrences of life (*cado*, to fall). The phrase is adapted from *Othello*, I. iii. 135. *Trade*—occupation. **The moving trade**—It is not my business to describe the sudden vicissitudes of life. 98. *Freeze the blood*—congeal the blood with horror. **Ready arts**—tricks ready to be used. 109. **Pipe**—lit. play on a wind instrument, hence sing.—A word very common in pastoral poems. **St. 25. Expl.**—*The poet in this stanza refers to his own poetical characteristic.* The description of the unforeseen events of life, the pathetic vicissitudes of human fortune, is foreign to his nature; nor is he versed in those tricks which are promptly employed by those who tell stories of blood-curdling adventures. His pleasure is rather in sitting alone in a leafy retreat in summer and composing simple poems which will give thoughtful readers much food for meditation. Wordsworth was pre-eminently the poet of reflection and thought. Of epic and dramatic power he possessed little. 101. *Hawes*—on the Ure, west of Wensley. *Richmond*—on the Swale, north of Wensley. *Repair*—go. 103. **Aspens**—A species of the Poplar, noted for the trembling of its leaves. The 'Aspen' is taken by poets as the symbol of mutability or change. Scott describes a woman as "Variable as the shade, By the light quivering aspen made"—*Marmion*. **St. 26. Par.**—The poet in course of a journey from Hawes to Richmond, happened to come across three aspen trees standing at the three corners of a square, and one stood within four yards of a well. [These aspens stood there as symbols of the great change which had come over the place since the death of the hart related in the



first part]. 105. *Imported*—meant. *Ill*—not easily. *Divine*—Guess or conjecture. **St. 27. Par.**—I could not well make out the meaning of the three aspen trees I saw at three corners of a square, and one near a well ; and when I drew in the reins of my horse to stop it, I found three pillars erected in a line the last of them being on the dusky summit of a hill. [These were the three pillars which Sir Walter had planted on the hoof-prints of the hart he had chased, one of these prints being on the “lofty brow” of a hill (see St. 14).] 109. *Grey*—the sign of decay. *Arms*—Branches. *Head*—top. Trees are compared to human beings. 110. *Wasted*—desolate. **St. 28. Expl.**—The whole landscape showed signs of decay. The trees were reduced to stumps without top and branches. The square mound upon which stood Sir Walter’s bower was in a mouldy state. There were left only the barest traces of human workmanship. From the few remnants of Sir Walter’s works, one might only infer that human efforts were once busy in erecting a house and an harbour there. 114. *Doleful*—dismal. *Survey*—view. 116. *Willing*—disposed. Notice how *W. attributes conscious will to inanimate Nature*. **St. 29. Expl.**—Here begins a description of the miserable change which came over the place where the hart was killed. Nature sympathised with his death by making the whole scene doleful. The poet in course of a ride from Hawes to Richmond came to the spot near Hart-leap Well. As he glanced over the whole landscape it seemed to him as if it was the most dismal prospect on earth, as if Nature voluntarily withdrew her freshness and beauty from the scene and laid a blight upon it to condemn the selfish recklessness of pleasure-seekers like Sir Walter. 117. *Thoughts and fancies*—ideas and images. *Thought* is abstract ; *fancy* is

*concrete.* *Thoughts* are reflections suggested by a thing. *Fancy* is the framing of concrete images of things. 118. *Garb*—clothes. *Attired*—Dressed. 119. *Accost*—Address. **St. 30. Par.**—I stood on the spot, absorbed in a variety of reflections and imaginations suggested by the decayed aspect of the place, when a man dressed in the clothes of a shepherd came up from the dell. I spoke to him and asked him what this place was. 122. *Re-hearsed*—Recited, 're-hearse' is to repeat the words of another. 123. *Jolly*—Full of mirth and gaiety. 124. *Ails*—Troubles. In his characteristic way Wordsworth attributes to the spot the capacity of feeling. *Curst*—execrated, doomed to evil. **St. 12. Par.**—The shepherd told the story of *Hart-leap Well* as related in the first part. It had once been a place full of life and mirth, but was now affected with some uneasiness—some unknown cause was troubling it now—a blight fell upon the place, it was doomed to evil. 125. *Stump*—the stub of a tree, the part remaining when the branches have decayed. **St. 23. Par.**—*The shepherd takes the poet into the past.* The features of the place are only the decayed remnants of past glory. The dead trunks of aspen—some say they are stumps of beech or elm trees—once formed Sir Walter's sylvan arbour and close by stood his lordly pleasure-house, the most splendid of all places in a hundred kingdoms. 129. *Own condition*—state of decay. **St. 30. Par.**—The decayed state of the bower tells its own tale—its very appearance shows that its present condition is one of decay. The basin, the fountain and the rivulet are there as standing monuments of Sir Walter's cruelty, but the splendid pleasure-house has vanished, showing the hollowness of human pride. 132. **A forgotten dream**—Just as a dream which we have forgotten cannot be recalled by our best

efforts, so all trace of the pleasure-house has disappeared, and no human effort will be able to find it out. 133. *Heifer*—A young cow. **St. 34. Par.**—No animal will touch the water of the spring falling into the stone-basin, for the water is poisoned, and often in the depth of night, a woeful sound of agony is heard to issue from the water. This is the effect of the curse which has fallen upon the place—no animal would drink of the water, and the mysterious groan coming out of the water is Nature's voice sympathising with the agony of the dead hart. 138. **Blood.....Blood.**—Murder calls for vengeance. *Cries out*—loudly demands. The expression is Biblical : "The voice of thy brother's *blood crieth* unto me from the ground"—*Genesis*, iv. 10. **St. 35. Expl.**—*The shepherd gives the popular explanation of the mysterious groan issuing out of the water of the basin and then proceeds to give his own explanation of the strange phenomenon.* Some matter-of-fact people suppose that a murder has been committed somewhere about the place and the groan is a call for vengeance. But the shepherd in his meditations while basking in the sun has conjectured that it is all on account of that poor hart who died here. **St. 36. Par.**—It is impossible to guess what thoughts ran through his mind. It is strange how he sprang down from the lofty brow of the hill to its foot only in three leaps, and the last leap shows that it was a fatal one. **St. 37. Par.**—For thirteen hours the hart ran in furious speed before the pursuing of Sir Walter ; and the simple-minded rustic cannot say why the hart loved the place so dearly that he came to die near the well. **St. 38. Par.**—*The simple-minded shepherd then goes on to assign the most probable cruse of the hart's liking for the place :—*It was perhaps the place where, composed to rest by the gentle murmur of the

fountain in summer, he used to fall asleep among the grass ; and it may have been of this water that he drank, when in infancy he used to stray from his mother's company.

**St. 39. Par.**—Perhaps at this very place he used to stand beneath the thorn in bloom listening to the warble of birds on shining April mornings, and for anything we know to the contrary, he may have been born somewhere very near this spot. 153. *Thorn*—a tree or shrub with spines. 154. *Carol*—a song of joy or devotion, hence any song ; (here) warble, the sweet, spontaneous melody of birds. 156. *Furlong*—the eighth part of a mile. See T. N. **St. 40. Par.**—Now that the hart is dead, the whole place wears a melancholy aspect.

There is neither grass nor the charming retreat. All freshness and beauty are gone. This is the most cheerless dell which the sun has ever visited. It is the bleakest spot on earth ; and the shepherd believes that the decay will continue till all the signs of human cruelty still remaining will have vanished.

**St. 41. Expl.**—The poet agrees thoroughly with the shepherd in this belief. In this respect his own belief almost coincides with that of the shepherd. He too is of opinion that the death of the hart was noticed by Nature. The cruel end of the hart did not escape the observant eye of Nature, who loves and cares for all harmless creatures and her voice is that of sympathy for the death of the hart. **Sympathy divine**—Nature is conceived as one with God without whose knowledge “ not a sparrow falls to the ground.” 165. **The Being**—God who is immanent in the world, lives and works in and through Nature's phenomena. 167. *Maintains*—continues to exercise. *Deep*—heartfelt. *Reverential*—full of reverence i.e. fear mingled with affection. 168. *Unoffending*—harmless.

**St. 42. Expl.**—This is the poet's plea for kindness

*towards all creatures of God.* God who is immanent in Nature, who lives and works in and through the clouds and air and the green leaves in the groves, never abates his intense and delicate sympathy for all the harmless creatures which he loves, and hence Nature, as the expression of God, mourns the death of the hart in the dolorous aspect which she has worn at the spot. **St. 43. Expl.**—The pleasure-house once built by Sir Walter to gratify his reckless pride has now crumbled into mould showing the worthlessness of human pride. On all sides of it an uncommon blight, a strange colour prevails. But kind Nature will again in her proper time invest the place with her freshness and beauty. **Dust**—Cf. “Dust thou art and unto dust returnest.” Tennyson in his “Aylmers Field” teaches the transitoriness of human splendour.—“*Dust* are our frames, and gilded dust our pride.” 174. *What we...been*—what we were and what we now are to what we have been reduced—the past splendour and the present decay. *Have been*—The *present perfect* is used for the past., Cf. “Another race *hath been*, and other palms are won.”—*Ode on Immortality.* **The millenial day**—the time when human nature will be softer than it is now, when man will learn the lesson of kindness to all creatures. *Monuments*—memorials of human cruelty, the pillars, the basin, &c., which still remain to remind us of man’s reckless pride. *Overgrown*—covered with Nature’s growth, and thus concealed from view. **St. 44.—Expl.**—Nature does not at once destroy the marks of human pride. She works ruin among them very gradually, removing one trace after another. Her object is by placing traces of past splendour and present decay together to emphasise the transitoriness of human pride and the unpardonable sin of cruelty. But Nature has not only a retributive but

also a healing power ; and when man will learn to be kind to all dumb creatures, these lingering remnants of human pride which Nature still preserves as warnings against cruelty will be again covered with Nature's growth and hidden from human view. When man will learn the lesson of universal sympathy, these warnings will not be necessary. "The seasons" will "twine luxuriant wreaths" around these memorials of cruelty. 177. *Divide*—learn jointly. **By...shows**—by "her beauty and her bloom" (172)—in her beautiful aspect Nature is a healing power. Cf.—

"The gentler work begun  
By Nature, softening and concealing,  
And busy with a hand of healing."—

*White Doe of Rylstone*

*What conceals*—the marks of wanton cruelty which Nature subjects to slow decay and then covers with her "luxuriant wreaths." 176. *Blend*—mingle i. e., allow pleasure or pride to interfere with the lives of God's creatures. 180. *Meanest &c.*—the smallest or the most insignificant creature that has the capacity of feeling pain. **St. 45. Expl.**—*The poem concludes with an emphatic plea for kindness to all living animals.* The poet and the grey-haired shepherd are jointly to learn a lesson which Nature teaches both through her beautiful objects which she reveals, and through those monuments of human cruelty which she conceals. The lesson is this : Man must never allow his pleasure or pride to injure the life of any living creature, however small or insignificant it may be. Nature preaches a lesson of kindness in two ways :—(1) by revealing her beauty, showing that all things have a life of their own, and (2) by hiding from view those objects (as here, the pleasure-house, the harbour) which she subjects to a slow decay to warn men against acts of cruelty.

**Q. How does Wordsworth describe the character of his own poetry ?**

A. He is not a lover of romance (like Scott or Byron)—his skill does not lie in the description of blood-curdling incidents or the thrilling vicissitudes of life. He loves rather to indulge in poetic musings in solitude and compose simple poems for thoughtful minds. "The moving...hearts." (97-100).

**Q. Give the leading thoughts of the second part of the poem.**

A. The story given in the first part was told by a "grey-headed shepherd" acquainted with the traditions of the place where the incidents are supposed to occur (as in Tennyson's *Aylmer's Field* the story was told by an old man, "a mine of memories.") The old man in his simplicity gives his own explanation of the attraction which the hart might have for the locality about the spring. Sir Walter is the type of reckless pride to which the life of the hart is sacrificed. But Nature recoils with disgust from all scenes of wanton cruelty. Hence a blight has fallen over the place. The scene of human pride is subjected to slow decay. "The spot is curst," and avoided by all living creatures. Gentle spring does not visit the scene around the "Hart-leap Well" (as in "Aylmer's Field" Sir Aylmer's noble mansion is levelled into a field.) We are not however left to contemplate a prospect of unredeemed desolation, but are assured that Nature will re-animate the place with her freshness and beauty. Nature is a retributive as well as a healing power. But we must learn—

"Never to blend our pleasure or our pride,  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

**Q. What is the moral of "Hart-leap Well" ?**

A. Man's pride is "gilded dust," vain and transitory.

"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"—[*Genesis*, iii. 19.] We should be kind to all the unoffending creatures of God. Even the meanest life that breathes has a claim to our reverential care, and must not be sacrificed to our pleasure or pride. The lesson is somewhat similar to that of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* :

"He prayeth well, who loveth well,  
Both man and bird and beast.  
He prayeth best, who loveth best,  
All things both great and small ;  
For the dear God loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."

—————R. 612--17.

[Read *Psaln* civ, in this connexion.]

### THE SPARROW'S NEST.

**Q. When and where was this poem composed ?**

**A.** It was composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grassmere, in 1801 and first published in 1807.

**Q. Describe the locality to which the poem alludes.**

**A.** It alludes to the high terrace at the end of the garden of the house of the poet's father at Cockermouth. This terrace was covered with closely-clipped privet and roses among which birds built their nests.

**Q. Give the argument of the poem.**

**A.** The 'sparrow's nest' reminds the poet of his boyish days passed with his sister. He expresses his indebtedness to her as she taught her many a lesson by her childish prattlements.

1. *Behold*--look. 3. *Chance discovered*--found out by chance. *Gleamed*--flashed. (1-4.) **Expl.**—The sight of a sparrow's nest



with shining blue eggs laid side by side, which he discovered by chance, recalled to him the happy memory of boyhood. *Vision, &c.*—a sight which gives joy. 5. *Started*—the sight gave me such a sudden thrill of joy—such an unexpected gleam of the distant past that I was startled. *Espy*—see. *House*—the sparrow's dwelling. *Sheltered bed*—the snug nest, screened from the roughness of the weather. 8. *Father's house*—a t Cockermouth. *In wet or dry*—in all seasons. 9. **Emmeline**—Dorothy, his sister, whom he loved very dearly, and who exercised a dominant and conspicuous influence over the poet's life. She was ready to devote herself to him with an affection wholly free from egotism or jealousy— an affection that yearned only to satisfy his subtlest needs, and to transfuse all that was best in herself into his larger being. 5. – 10 **Expl.**—The sight of the sparrow's nest gave the poet a sudden thrill of surprise and at once reminded him of another and similar snug nest in the leafy bush and the garden at Cockermouth, which he used to visit with his sister in all seasons, regardless of the weather.

11. *It*—the nest. *Fear it*—she had a 'delicate' fear or reverence for all life. She feared that she might injure the eggs. She had not, of course, the poet's "grasp of mind or his poetic power; but her sensitiveness to nature was quite as keen as his, and her disposition resembled his 'with sunshine added to daylight' " —Myers.

"Birds in the bower, and lamb in the green field.  
 Could they have known her, would have loved; methought  
 Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,  
 That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,  
 And everything she looked on, should have had  
 An intimation how she bore herself  
 Towards them, and to all creatures."

12. Her affection for natural objects drew her towards the nest, but her instinctive fear of doing any injury to these small creatures kept her at a distance. Similarly she loved the butterfly but

"Feared to brush  
The dust from off its wings"

— *To a Butterfly* (March 14, 1802.)

13. **Heart**—Feelings (of delicate fear and love)—the heart is the seat of the feelings. 14. *Prattler* &c.—quite a child. *To prattle* is to talk lightly and artlessly like a child. 11—14. **Expl.**—*The poet here describes his sister's reverence and sympathy for Nature, which appeared very early in her life. Even in lisping childhood she showed her love and 'delicate fear' for natural objects. The delicacy of her insight into natural beauty drew her towards the sparrow's nest, but her tender feeling and fear of doing any injury to animal life made her shrink from approaching it. Thus even in her childhood she taught the poet many a simple, philosophical lesson.* 15. **Blessing**—happiness. She who exercised such a noble influence over his life and made it happy. The word is printed with an initial capital in Knight's edition. 17. **Eyes**—power of observation; insight into Nature. **Ear**—power of appreciating the harmony or melody of Nature's music. 18. **Humble cares**—simple duties towards the meanest thing that lives. **Delicate fears**—tender regard for life. 19. **A heart**—a sensitive and sympathetic disposition. **The fountain...tears**—in app. to 'heart'—a heart full of pity, one from which sympathetic tears gush forth like a fountain—a heart which overflows with sincere sympathy. 20. *Thought*—the power of pensive reflection. 15—20. **Expl.**—*The poet expresses his indebtedness to his sister, who*

exercised a dominant influence over him throughout his life. She was with him from his very childhood and taught him much. It was from her that the poet imbibed his delicate insight into Nature, and his sympathy for all natural objects—his unbounded love for everything, his power of meditation and the feeling of delight at observing the peace and joy pervading all Nature. "Miss Wordsworth's tenderness for all living things gives character and pathos to her landscapes, and evokes from the wildest solitude some note that thrills the heart."—Myers.

**Q. How was Wordsworth indebted to his sister?**

A. See ll. 15—20, and *Note* on l. 9. She gave the poet a delicate insight into Nature's beauty and taught him tenderness to the meanest object. "The shooting light of her wild eyes" reflected to the full the strain of imaginative emotion which was mingled in the poet's nature with a spirit of steadfast and conservative virtue.

### TO THE CUCKOO.

**Q. When and where was this poem composed?**

A. This poem is commonly stated to have been composed in 1804, but in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* there are references to the poet's working at it in 1802. It was first published in 1807, and afterwards placed among the 'Poems of the Imagination.'

**Q. What place does the Cuckoo occupy in W.'s thought?**

A. The Cuckoo was a favourite bird with W. In the *Solitary Reaper*, again, he says—

"A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
In spring time from the cuckoo bird."

**St. 1.** *Blithe*—merry, joyous, cheerful. The *cuckoo* is a migratory bird. It visits England about the middle of April. Its voice announces the approach of spring. Hence all the charms of spring are associated with the cuckoo. It suggests pleasant ideas to the mind. *New-comer*—because the bird departs to warmer climates in winter and comes back to England in spring. Cf.—

“Hail beautiful stranger of the grove !  
Thou messenger of spring !”—*Logan*.

*Heard*—in former years, in childhood. *Hear*—sc. now. *Re-joyce*—feel glad. *But*—only. **A wandering voice**—A voice without a body—a spirit-voice flitting about from one grove to another. The phrase refers to the fact that though commonly heard in spring it is very seldom seen. It admirably expresses the “phantom-like ubiquity” of this “unseen visitor of spring. Everyone living in the country is familiar with the cuckoo’s call ; not one person in hundred has ever seen a cuckoo.” Wordsworth himself, in his preface to the edition of 1815 remarks :—“ This concise interrogation characterizes the seeming ubiquity of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence.” Shelley calls the *Shylark* “an unbodyed joy.” Cf. also in the same ode—

“Hail to thee, blithe spirit !  
Bird though never wert.”

**Par.**—O merry messenger of spring ! I listened to your notes in my boyhood, and hear it again now and feel delighted to learn that you have arrived again. You are so seldom seen that I am not sure whether I should call you a bird or only an unseen voice moving from place to place.

**St. 2.** *Two-fold*—consisting of two notes *coo-coo*.<sup>\*</sup> In his *Sonnet to the Cuckoo*, W. calls them “twin notes.” *Shout*—This word is ill-chosen, for it suggests too loud a sound. **At**

**once...near**—The first of these “twin notes” is louder and seems to suggest that the bird is very near; while the second note is fainter and makes it seem that the bird is far away.

**Far**.—From my resting place on the grass I hear your call consisting of two notes, the first of which is so loud as to suggest that you are close at hand while the second is fainter and makes it seem as if all in an instant you have flown off to a distant hill.

**St. 3.—Babbling**—uttering in an inarticulate and unintelligible way. *To babble* is to utter sounds frequently, incessantly, or indistinctly, e. g., a *babbling* echo, a *babbling* stream, &c. **Babbling...flowers**—repeating only to the valley thy message of the coming approach of spring with its attractions, sun-shine, flowers, &c. *Tale*—memory, remembrance. **Visionary hours**—boyhood in which all things appeared like *visions*—or the beautiful images of an unreal dream; when, as the poet says in his *Ode on Immortality*,—

“The earth and every common sight” seemed  
“Apparell’d in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.”

The word ‘visionary’ is now used in a bad sense—“relating to vain or wild schemes, quixotic projects.”

**Expl.**—The cry of the *ouckoo* which incessantly and inarticulately repeats to the valley its message of the advent of spring with its charming associations—its pleasant sun-shine, its blooming flowers—revives in the poet the memory of his happy boyhood, when all things appeared to him invested with the “glory and freshness of a dream.” [This stanza like many others in W.’s poems is an illustration of the poet’s tendency to *idealise* the scene around him. He often retreats from the external scene into his own mind. As Hutton says.—“He carries his own spiritual world with him, draws the thing or

thought or feeling on which he intends to write, from its common orbit, fixes it, like a new star, in his own higher firmament and there contemplates it beneath the gleaming lights and mysterious shadows of its new sphere."—*Essays.*]

St. 4.—*Thrice welcome*—(*Thrice* has simply an intensive force)—most heartily welcome. *Even yet*—though I am now a man, and the "visionary hours" of the past are left behind, though I am no longer the school-boy described in the next stanza. *Invisible*—incapable of being seen because without a body. *A voice*—sound without body. Cf. 'wandering voice.' **A mystery**—a thing which cannot be understood. To the childish imagination the *cuckoo* is a mystery, because though often heard it is seldom seen;—it is a voice without a body, hence it is something like a mysterious spirit.

St. 5. *In my school-boys days, &c.*—The cuckoo\* is a favourite with school-boys. Cf. Logan—

The school-boy wandering through the wood,  
To pull the primrose gay,  
Starts the new voice of Spring to hear,  
And imitates thy lay."

St. 4—5. **Par.**—I hail your visit with warm delight, sweet bird, whose voice we love to hear in spring. To my imagination even now when the visionary hours of boyhood are past, you scarcely seem to be a bird, but rather a bodiless mysterious spirit-voice, the same that I heard when I was a boy at school. Then, on hearing that cry I looked everywhere amongst trees and bushes, and in the sky. St. 6. *Roam*—wander. *A hope, a love*—an object which I loved and longed to see. *Hope*—object which I hoped to see. **Par.**—The poet describes his days of boyhood when the cry of the cuckoo made him roam about from place to place in search of the bird. He wandered through woods and in the open.

But, however much he loved the bird and longed to find the bird he loved, he never saw it. *The green*—open, grassy ground. *Still*—always. **St. 7.** *Yet*—old as I am. **Beget**—Sc. in my imagination ; reproduce in imagination. **Golden time**—the happy season of boyhood, the time when the “visionary gleam” which overspread earth and heaven had not yet fled. **Expl.**—The poet, old as he is, can lie once more on the grassy ground and listen to the cry of the cuckoo, until his imagination revives in him the happy season of youth. (Similarly the sight of the rainbow in the sky recalls to him the days when “life began.”) He seems to be enjoying once more the glorious days of boyhood. **St. 8.**—*Blessed*—happy. The poet ‘blesses’ the bird because it has taught him a beautiful lesson of *Idealism*. *The earth... place*—this solid, firm-set earth. *Again*—as in childhood. *Unsubstantial*—not material, not made of crude matter. **Fairy place**—a land of enchantment, a place of wonders, the habitation of a spirit like the cuckoo. *Fit home*—a suitable habitation. **Expl.**—The poet here puts forward a poetical argument against *materialism*, the theory that this world with all its “furniture” is made up of crude, inert, lifeless matter. The existence of a spirit-voice like the cuckoo is a strong argument against this cold doctrine. The cuckoo has taught the poet the lesson that the world is not bound by blind material laws but a land of fairy wonders, a place which forms the suitable habitation of a mysterious spirit like the cuckoo. In a material world, a voice without a body is an impossibility. Hence the poet goes back to his childhood when the world seemed to be a fairy place. [In his Preface to *The Ode on Immortality*, Wordsworth remarks:—“To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he could look back, could bear testimony.”]

**Q. Analyse the thoughts of the poem.**

A. (a.) *The character of the bird.* It is the happy messenger of spring. It avoids observation. Though heard so often in spring it is seldom seen. It is more a spirit-voice than a bird. Its cry made up of two notes makes the bird seem to be both far off and near.

(b.) *The special charm of the Cuckoo for Wordsworth.* The poet welcomes the cuckoo as its voice revives the memories of his happy boyhood—his school-days, when he looked everywhere “in bush, and tree and sky” to find the bird he loved so much.

(c.) *The idealistic lesson which the Cuckoo teaches.* The cry of the bird makes the material realities of life disappear and causes the solid, firm-set earth seem to be a land of enchantment, the fit home for a fairy visitant like the cuckoo, a “wandering voice” without a body.

**Q. Point out the beauty of the poem.**

A. (a) “The poem has an exaltation and a glory, joined with an exquisiteness of expression, which place it in the highest rank amongst the many master-piece of its illustrious Author.” — *Palgrave*.

(b.) “This lyric, notwithstanding its ethereal imaginative beauty, was stigmatized as affected and ridiculous by the blindness of contemporary criticism. Of all his own poems it was Wordsworth’s favourite.” — *Turner*.

**Q. Point out any defective rhymes in the poem.**

A. Ll. 5 and 7, 21 and 23.

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## THE RED-BREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY.

**Q. Give the date and history of the poem.**

**A.** The incidents described in the poem were observed in the beautiful orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

• The edition of 1857 assigns the poem to the year 1806, but in Dorothy Wordsworth's JOURNAL, is found, under date "Sunday, 18th" (April 1802), the following note :—"A mild grey morning with rising vapours. We sat in the orchard. William wrote the poem on the Robin and the Butterfly." That this was the correct date of the composition of the poem is made more evident by the note two days later :—"Tuesday, 20th—W. wrote a conclusion to the poem of the butterfly. 'I've watched you now a full half hour.'—*William Knight.*"

1. *The bird...best*—The Robin is a favourite bird. It has very whimsical characteristics. It sometimes approaches man with the greatest confidence, but sometimes again shows peculiar jealousy and shuns human society. 2. **Pious bird**—Alluding to the common tradition that when Jesus Christ was led out to Calvary with a crown of thorns on his head a Robin pecked a thorn out of the crown, and the blood which issued from the wound falling on the bird dyed its breast with red. In commemoration of this pious act the bird has ever since worn the badge of its red breast. 3. *English Robin*—the name the bird has got in England. 4. *Comes...doors*—approaches human dwellings. 5. *Sobbing—sighing.*

6—8. Art thou the bird called Peter by the peasants of Norway, Thomas by the people of Finland and the interior parts of Russia? 12. **Father Adam**—The reference is to Par. Lost xi. 185—203, where Adam points out to Eve certain ominous signs before Michael came down to dispossess them of

Eden. Adam sees "the bird of Jove" (the Eagle) chasing "two birds of gayest plume" and "the beast that reigns in woods" (the lion) pursuing "a gentle brace" (hart and hind). The two birds and the two deer are types of the human pair.

Adam says :—

"O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,  
Which Heaven by these mute signs in nature shows,  
Forerunners of his purpose, or to warn

Us ..... that we are dust,  
And thither must return, and be no more ?

Why else this double object in our sight,  
Of flight pursued in the air and o'er the ground.

\*One way the self-same hour ?"—P. L. xi, 193—203.

**Could...again.—Expl.**—Had Adam seen this sight of the Red-breast chasing a butterfly here he would have wished to close his eyes again. Such a sight would have seemed as ominous as that of the Eagle chasing the pair of birds or the Lion chasing the pair of deer which he saw in Eden. Wordsworth means that Adam would have been pained at the sight. [ Wordsworth sees only peace and joy in Nature. There is one aspect of Nature which he almost completely ignores, viz. :—"Nature red in tooth and claw," Nature as the scene of rapine and slaughter. This cruel aspect was seen by Tennyson. *This is perhaps the only place where W. barely recognises the cruel aspect of Nature*] 15. **Knew...friend**—had the butterfly known that the poet was his friend he would have flown to him to the shady place where he was sitting. 19. **Darts about**—flies rapidly from place to place. 21. **Bewildering**—being lost in the wilderness or forest, losing their way in the wood. 22. **The little children**—The children in the wood. A Norfolk gentleman on his death-bed left a little son, three years old, and a still younger daughter named Jane, to the care of his wife's brother. The boy was to have

£300 a year when he came of age and the girl £500 as a wedding portion ; but if the children died previously, the uncle was to inherit. After twelve months had elapsed, the uncle hired two ruffians to murder the two babes. As they went along, one of the ruffians relented, and killed his fellow and left the children in a wood. The poor babes gathered blackberries to allay their hunger, and died during the night, and Robin Red-breast covered them over with straw-berry leaves. All things went ill with the cruel uncle ; his sons died, his barns were fired, his cattle died, and he himself perished in gaol. After the lapse of seven years, the ruffian was taken up for high-way robbery, and confessed the whole affair. 23.

**Painfully**—with so much pain or labour, diligently. **Can... wood ?—Expl.**—It is very strange that a bird which with great pains covered the dead bodies of the children in the wood with straw-berry leaves should be so cruel as to pursue another beautiful fellow creature. I am surprized to find that a bird which was so kind to the little children when they had lost their way should be so cruel to the butterfly. 24—6. The poet seems disposed to think that some uneasiness caused the bird to chase the harmless and beautiful butterfly. It was not in a calm, deliberate mood that the Redbreast pursued the unoffending butterfly. 30. **Indoor sadness**—the gloomy mood in which we confine ourselves indoors in dark winter days. 30—4. **Expl.**—*The poet exhorts the Robin to be kind and friendly to the butterfly.* The reason which he puts forward is this : Both the bird and insect cheer mankind, each in his proper season ; the Robin appears on the window-sill in the cheerless days of winter, enlivening the gloom of human society, and the butterfly cheers man in summer days by the display of his beautiful wings and by his merry

*And the butterfly*

sports. There is nothing therefore to prevent them from being friends to each other. 35—6. **Par.** This is another reason why the Robin and the butterfly should be friends. They not only both cheer men, but are both equally beautiful. 37—9. **Par.**—O religious bird who is the best favourite of man! If you wish to be happy in your nest, love the butterfly or at least do him no harm.

**Q. Give the argument of the poem.**

**A.** The poet remonstrates with the Redbreast for chasing the butterfly. This cruelty on the part of the bird is inconsistent with the character of a pious bird. As both the bird and the insect equally gladden the heart of men and are equally beautiful, the Redbreast should not pursue the butterfly.

**Q. What is the moral lesson of the poem?**

**A.** One beautiful creature should not prey upon another. They should in unison, combine to cheer the heart of man. The lesson is similar to that of Cowper's *Nightingale and the Glow-worm*: "Brother should not war with brother," but should

"Sing and shine by sweet consent  
Till life's poor transient night is spent,  
Respecting in each other's case  
The gifts of nature and of grace."

## TO A BUTTERFLY.

**Q. Give the date and history of the poem.**

**A.** The poem was composed in the Orchard, Townend, Grasmere, and first published in 1807.

**Q. Characterize the poem.**

**A.** It is an illustration of Wordsworth's power of drawing "uncommon delights from very common things." The criti-

cism with which the poet was first assailed. and which is reflected in the admirable parody published among the "Rejected Addresses" was that he was ridiculously simple, that he made an unintelligible fuss about common feelings and common things. We may say that this very simplicity contributes to the beauty of W.'s poetry.

2. *Self-poised*—balanced by your own efforts. 5. *Not... motionless*—you are more motionless than the frozen sea. The frozen sea is calm but at other times the sea is in 'ceaseless motion. 8. *Found you out*—discovered you. 1—9. *Par.*—The poet has closely observed a butterfly full half an hour, balanced by its own efforts upon a yellow flower, but during this time has found hardly any sign of motion in it, so much so that he has not been able to make out whether it has been sleeping or sucking honey from the flower. Its rest is so striking that it may be compared to the motionlessness of the frozen sea. But the contrast is great, when the mild breeze has touched the butterfly among the trees, and tempted it come out again. Then its joy knows no bounds. 10. *Plot*—a small extent of ground. *Orchard*—(A. S. *Ort-geard*, i. e. wort-yard, a yard for herbs). An enclosure or assemblage of fruit-trees. 11. *My trees &c.*—Many of the trees in the Orchard at Dove Cottage were planted by the poet himself and "many of the flowers by Dorothy Wordsworth"—Knight. *Sanctuary*—(L. *sanctus*, sacred.) A sacred and inviolable asylum, a place of refuge and protection. In the Christian church, the *bema* or inner portion of the church, immediately round the altar, was called the sanctuary. From the sacred character of the churches they came to be resorted to as asylums by fugitives from the hands of justice, and afterwards certain churches were set apart specially for that purpose, and were

termed *sanctuaries*. The gross abuses to which this system gave rise, as tending entirely to defeat the ends of justice, led to their abolition. Formerly in England a person accused of any crime (except treason and sacrilege), if he fled to any church or churchyard and confessed himself guilty before the coroner and took the oath to leave the land, he saved his life but forfeited his property. All privilege of sanctuary was abolished by 21 Jac. I. c. 28. 10—15. **Expl.**—The poet invites the butterfly to come to him and his sister and sit on a bough close to them ; for the piece of Orchard-ground belongs to them—the trees have been planted by himself and the flowers by his sister. He assures the butterfly that the Orchard-ground might be regarded by it as an inviolable asylum. As a criminal taking refuge in a sanctuary thought himself safe from the hands of justice, so the butterfly might take refuge among the trees in the Orchard at Dove Cottage without any fear of injury. 17. **Summer-days**—the happy days of youth. Happy youth is compared to summer (and spring) as cheerless age to chill winter (Cf. “The white winter of age”—*The Passing of Arthur*.) In *The Cuckoo* the poet refers to the “golden time” of youth. The “summer-days” of childhood spent at Cockermouth before 1778, are also referred to in the first poem, *To a butterfly* (written on the 14th March, 1802.) See T. N. 19. *As twenty &c.*—One ‘summer-day’ of childhood gives as much happiness as twenty days give in advanced age. 16—19. **Par.**—When the butterfly will sit on a bough near them, “dead times will revive” in them. They will talk of the pleasant days of childhood—a golden time—when a single day gave more pleasure than twenty days give now.

**Q. Give the argument of the poem.**

A. The sight of a butterfly recalls to the poet the "golden time" of youth—the time when the live-long day brought more happiness than twenty days bring now.

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TO THE SMALL CELANDINE.

**Q. Give (a) the date and (b) the history of the poem.**

\* A. (a) It was written on April 30, 1802, at Townend, Grasmere, and published in 1807. (b) In Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* the following occurs, under date April 30. "We came into the Orchard directly after breakfast..... We began to write the poem of the Celandine."

1. *Pansy*—the garden-violet, called also *heart's ease*. It is taken by poets as the symbol of *thought*. *King-cups*—another flower, the butter-cup. *Daisy*—*Day's eye*. It blossoms nearly all the year round, and is constantly found with open flowers, from March to October. Few of the poems of Burns are better known and admired than his address to the daisy, the "wee modest crimson-tipped flowers." 2. *Live upon*—subsist upon, be supplied or nourished with. *Their praises*—the praise bestowed upon them. 7. *Shall be mine*—shall be my favourite. 8. *Little Celandine*—The *Celandine* (properly *chelidonium*, from Gr. *chelidon*, a swallow, the plant being said to flower at the coming, and dry up at the departure, of the swallow) is a genus of plants belong to the order of the *Poppy*. The *Little Celandine* has little star-shaped blossoms. Wordsworth says:—"It is remarkable that this flower coming out so early in the spring as it does, and so bright and beautiful and in such profusion should not have been noticed earlier in English verse. What adds much to the interest that attend it is its habit of *shutting itself up*

and opening out according to the degree of light and temperature of the air." He says again—

"There is a flower, the *Lesser Celandine*,  
That shrinks like many more from cold and rain ;  
And the first moment that the sun may shine,  
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again !"

— *A Lesson.*

**St. 1. Par.**—*This stanza is introductory to the poem.* All other flowers have received the tribute of poets. Let pansies and other well-known blossoms enjoy the praise which is bestowed upon them. Primroses will be celebrated for ever. As long as violets bloom, their beauty will be praised by poets. But Wordsworth will choose for his subject the Small Celandine,—a flower which has not been noticed earlier in English verse. 9. *Some men*—astronomers. 10. *For*—with the object of. 11. *They*—the eyes. 12. **Keep a rout** make a great bustle or noise. **Rout**—an uproar, a noise. 13. **Trow**—believe ; suppose. The word is *obsolete*. 15. *Stir*—bustle. 16. *Sage*—wise. **St. 2. Expl.**—*In the poet's opinion the discovery of the Celandine is as important as that of a star by an astronomer.* Astronomers gaze far into the depth of sky to discover a star ; they search for a star far and wide in the heavens, and when they have made a new discovery, they make a great bustle over it. Similarly the poet after his discovery of the little Celandine will make a great noise by writing a long poem upon it. 17. *Modest*—unassuming. The Celandine has small flowers of an unobtrusive yellow colour (unlike the butter-cup. St. 7.) Cf. l. 42. "Unassuming spirit." In second poem to the Celandine the poet says—"Thou dost play at hide and seek." *Withal*—at the same time. **Elf**—a little spirit. Notice again Wordsworth's characteristic method of transferring natural objects into an atmosphere



altogether his own. To his fancy the Celandine is not simply a flower but a beautiful little spirit. Similary the *daisy* is compared to a nun (l. 19) and a maiden (l. 18), &c. **Bold**—making a prominent exhibition of itself. Note how *W. attributes human feeling to an inanimate object.* **Lavish... thyself**—lavishly displaying thy beauty. *Lavish*—bestowing profusely. Cf. the next stanza, "*Spreading...prodigal.*" 19. *Needs.* &c.—could not help meeting, you are so lavish of your charms. 20. *High and low*—in high and low places. The flower grows on waste places and on old walls. 22. *'Twas...know*—I was not familiar with the flower. 24. *Greetings*—welcomes. **St. 3. Par.**—*This stanza describes the characteristics of the flower and the poet's new liking for it.* The Celandine is unassuming and seems to undervalue itself, but sometimes again it is like a bold little spirit, revealing its profuse beauty. The poet has seen the flower in high and low places for thirty years and yet he has never noticed it much. But now that it is his favourite, he greets it fifty times a day wherever he may happen to meet it. 26. *Before* &c.—before the thrush has thought of having a nest for herself to receive her young ones, i. e., before spring has set in. 28. **With half a call**—at the slightest indication of approaching spring. 'Call' is a hunting term—a note blown on the horn to encourage the hounds. 29. *Spreading out*—displaying. **Glossy breast**—smooth and shining petals. 30. *Careless prodigal*—an extravagant spender; a spendthrift. 31. *Telling tales about*—bringing tidings of approaching spring, indicating the advent. of spring. 32. *When...none*—when the winter is hardly over. **St. 4. Par.**—*This stanza describes the time when the Celandine appears.* The flower will open and display the exuberant beauty of its petals like a thought-

less spendthrift, and indicate the near approach of spring even when the winter still "chills the lap of May," when the new leaves have not grown on a bush, and when no thrush has yet thought of building a nest for her young ones, soon to be born. The *Celandine* is a very early spring flower like the primrose. The poet says in his second poem—

Soon as gentle breezes bring  
News of winter's vanishing,  
And the children built their bowers,

... ..

With the proudest thou art there.

33. **Vain...mood**—men of a changing mood<sup>c</sup> of mind. They are not constant in their likings for any flower. *Mood*—Temporary state of mind in regard to a feeling. 34. **Travel &c.**—follow the prevailing fashion. 35. *Never* &c.—Do not heed what they say or feel. *Aver*—declare. 36. **Wanton wooers**—fickle lovers, who love all flowers without being constant to any. *Wanton*—loose, frolicsome. 37. **Thrifty**—frugal, sparing in her affections, opp. to *wanton*. Instead of wasting her affections upon all flowers the cottager bestows them upon the *Celandine*. **St. 5. Expl.**—*W.* refers to the neglect in which poets have left the *Celandine*, but points out that the flower has this solace that it is liked by the humble cottager. Poets are people of a fickle disposition. Regardless of merit they follow the prevalent fashion in praising all flowers. They are all inconstant lovers, never sticking to any particular flower for a long time. Their love is, therefore, not worth being sought after. But the poor cottager who dwells at home, indifferent to prevalent fashions, loves to see the *Celandine* grow about her cottage. The opening of the flower is the announcement of the approaching visit of spring. 41. *Com-*

*fort...merit*—you should have comfort in the consciousness of your merit. 42. *Kindly*—gentle. *Unassuming*—modest. *Spirit*—an Elf. Cf. l. 17. 43. *Careless &c.*—regardless of the place where you bloom. 44. *Pleasant face*—joyful appearance. 48. *But &c.*—that is not, &c. **St. 6. Expl.**—*The poet comforts the flower. Though neglected by poets, it does not deserve neglect. The Celandine should derive comfort from the thought that it has its own merit.* He says: “Gentle and modest little beautiful spirit, you seem to have a low opinion of your own merits. But your merits do not deserve neglect. You display your joyful beauty in all places—on moors, in woods, and in lanes, regardless of the surroundings in the midst of which you bloom. No place is too humble for your habitation.” 49. *Ill befall*—woe betide, let mischance happen to. 50. **Children.....hours**—which bloom in the hot days of summer and spring. The Celandine opens when winter is hardly over. See l. 32. **Flaring**—exposed to too much heat and light. 51. *Butter-cups*—These flowers of the Crowfoot family are *conspicuous* ornaments in fields and hedges. *That...no*—flowers which will thrust themselves upon our notice in spite of ourselves. 53. *Of lofty mien*—large and showy. *Mien*—look, manner, bearing. 54. *Worldlings*—men of the world. The term ‘world’ is here used in the special sense borrowed from the New Testament, i. e. ambition, and the pursuit of wealth, and wasteful pleasures. Hence people in whom such motives are predominant, men who occupy a conspicuous position in society ;—a term of contempt. **St. 7. Expl.**—*The poet proceeds in the same comforting strain.* He will not mind any mischance happening to those gaudy yellow flowers which appear in the heat and glare of mid-spring and summer, Butter-cups, for instance,

which are so conspicuous as to force themselves upon our attention, and other large and showy flowers which, like men who make much noise in the world, take the praise which properly belongs to the modest, little *Celandine*. As men in the higher ranks of society often unjustly win the praise which properly belongs to men in humble life, so Buttercups and other showy flowers have usurped the praise which should be bestowed upon the unassuming *Celandine*. 57. *Prophet &c.*—The forerunner of the pleasures of spring. As a prophet foretells what the future will bring, so the *Celandine* indicates the approach of spring and its joys. 58. *Ill-requited*—poorly repaid for its merits. 59. *Herald*—forerunner, harbinger. *Mighty band*—a large group of flowers. 60. *A joyous train*—a series of delightful flowers. *Ensuing*—coming. Cf. —

“Liveliest of the *vernal train*

When ye are all out again”—*To the same Flower*.

61. *Serving...command*—gratifying the desire of my heart, *i. e.*, appearing whenever I desire you to do so. 62. **Tasks &c.**—*Renewing*—*i. e.* performing again and again the same task which is no task to you *i. e.* readily and willingly performing the same task of opening and shutting your blossoms as if it were no task at all. It opens on sunny days and closes its petals at dusk. 63. *As doth behove*—as is fitting. 64. *Hymns*—songs of praise. **St. 8. Expl.**—*The poet is sorry to find the merits of the Celandine go unrewarded upon earth.*—He says :—“Thou harbinger of the pleasures of spring that hast never received thy due praise ! Thou art the forerunner of a large multitude of delightful flowers coming behind thee ! Whenever my heart so desires thou appearest, and dost perform thy task of alternately opening and closing thy blossoms, as willingly as if they were no tasks to thee ! As a recompense for this, I will sing songs praising thee whom I love.”

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## COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

**Give the date and history of the sonnet.**

1. To this sonnet W. assigned the date Sept. 3, 1802, when he was on his return journey from France; but he subsequently remarked, and his sister's journal at any rate shows, that the view described struck them when they were leaving London by the Dover Coach on their way to the Continent, July 30th, 1802. It is just possible, however, that the main features of the poem were suggested to the poet's mind on the latter date and that it was actually composed later; but Prof. Knight seems to regard the date originally assigned as simply an error.

**Q. Write a note upon the structure of the poem.**

1. It is a *sonnet*, i. e., a short poem of fourteen lines, dealing with a single subject. A *sonnet* should strictly fall into two parts—the *octave*, consisting of two four-lined stanzas, and the *sestet*, consisting of two three-lined stanzas. In the octave the 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th lines should rhyme together; in the sestet each line of one stanza should rhyme with the corresponding line of the other stanza. But there are occasional variations.

**Westminster Bridge** :—crosses the Thames near Westminster Abbey. See T. N. I. Earth cannot show any thing finer than the sight seen from Westminster Bridge. It is, to use Dorothy W's language, "one of Nature's own grand spectacles." 2. *Dull*—callous, incapable of feeling. 3. *Touching*—affecting, striking. *Majesty*—grandeur. 4. *City*—London. *Like a garment &c.*—The city is *invested* with beauty. 'As a man's body is covered with dress so London has put on its beauty. The figure of a dress is

Biblical ; Cf.—"O Lord, my God, thou art very great ; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment"—*Psaln, civ.* 1—2. And—

"Blue isles and snowy mountains wear  
The purple noon's transparent light."—Shelley.

5. **Bare**—clear, not covered with smoke. 6. *Ships*—at anchor on the Thames below the Westminster Bridge. *Towers*—e.g. those of Westminster Abbey, of Whitehall &c. *Domes*—cnpola. *Temples*—used generally for 'places of worship,' hence churches. See T. N. 7. **Lie open &c.**—The poet's eye can survey the farthest parts of the city where it merges into the fields. "London seen in its early morning purity and freedom from smoke seems to be one with the fields. Only on such a morning could London be felt to have a fellowship with the fields so far away"—*Turner*. *Unto*—up to. *To the sky*—the sky is visible in the morning but when a dense cloud of smoke issues from the city it is hidden from view. 8. *Glittering*—shining. 9. *Steep*—The sun-light is compared to a subtle fluid in which the whole scene is soaked. For a similar idea Cf.—

"He beheld the sun  
Rise up and bathe the world in light"—*Excursion*.

10. *First splendour*—the brightness of its early beams.  
11. *Ne'er...deep*—The 'silence and the 'calm' rivalled even that of "mute insensate things" (*The Education of Nature*.) Cf.—

"The city's voice is soft like Solitude's.—Shelley,  
*Stanzas written near Naples*.

12. *River*—The Thames. *Glideth*—flows gently on. *His*—Horatius in Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* addresses the Tiber as "Father Tiber !" **At will**—with the repose which is

its characteristic, without being disturbed by the stroke of oars or paddles. "Unvexed by oars or moving keels, unpressed to human service."—Turner. Main (*Treasury of English Sonnets*) compares—

"It quivers down the hill,

Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will,"

from another of Wordsworth's sonnets. 13. **Dear God—**

An expression of strong emotion. The poet is awakened to a sense of the spirit of God dwelling in the undisturbed repose of the scene. Turner remarks :—"The poet feels that even his wondrous power of speech cannot give the intensity of his impression, and startles us with an invocation natural enough to one with whom God and Nature were never far apart."

*The very...asleep*—the only movement in the scene being the gliding of the river. 14. **Mighty heart—**(viz London) the centre of a vast kingdom. The city is compared to the heart of a mighty giant, the great bustle of the city to the pulsations of the giant's heart ; these pulsations are now at rest. The city is asleep and its bustle of daily life has not yet begun.

**Q. Give the argument of the sonnet and paraphrase it.**

**A. The argument—**The reflections in the sonnet are suggested by the appearance of London as seen from Westminster Bridge at an early hour on a summer morning when the city is in repose and its bustle has not begun.

**Paraphrase :** There cannot be a finer sight on earth than this now before the poet. He who could pass by it unnoticed would be a man of callous heart, the scene is so striking in its grandeur ! The brightness of the sun rests upon the city of London like a garment, all its buildings and the ships in the river like are open to view, unconcealed by its

usual pall of smoke. The city seems now to be one with the distant fields and with the bright sky above. The rising sun never lit up a scene more beautiful than this, or on more peaceful. The very houses are hushed in repose. The activity and bustle of the vast city have not yet begun. The only sign of movement in the whole landscape is the gentle gliding of the Thames.

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## ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

**Q. Give the date and history of the poem.**

**A.** This sonnet was composed in August 1802, and first published in 1807. It was included in the *Sonnets on Liberty*, which included also the lines *To the men of Kent, On England and Switzerland*.

**Q. Give the history of Venice in her days of glory.**

**A.** The invasion of Atilla, chief of the Huns in the 5th century A. D. drove many of the inhabitants of Venetia, a province of which Padua and Aquileia were the chief, to take refuge among the numerous small islands at the head of the Adriatic, and here they founded Venice. Protected by her *lagunes* Venice became a flourishing republic and a great naval power. She rapidly grew to be the mistress of the Mediterranean. She played an important part in the Crusades; and in the fourth Crusade, in 1202, the Venetians shared with the Latins the glory of the conquest of Constantinople. In 1453, the Eastern Capital was taken by the Turks, and Venice alone kept the invaders in check. The close of the 15th century marks the culmination of Venetian power.



**Q. When did the Venetian Republic become extinct?**

**A.** About the beginning of the 16th century the power of Venice gradually declined. Her fate was sealed by the Treaty of Campo Formio, in 1799, when her territories were broken up and divided between Emperor Francis of Austria and Napoleon, who annexed Venice to the crown of Italy, in 1805. [In 1814 Venice became a dependency of Austria, but was finally united to the kingdom of Italy, in 1866.]

**LL. 1—8.** *The poet describes the past glory of Venice when she had been the great naval and commercial power in Europe, the mistress of the Mediterranean, the bulwark against Ottoman incursion.* [Byron (*Childe Harold* Canto iv.) and Shelly (*Lines written in the Euganean Hills*) similarly refer to the past splendour of Venice.] 1. *Once*—from the 13th to the 15th century. See Introductory *Q.* and *A.*, and *T. N.* **Hold in fee**—i. e., hold in possession. *A. S.* *fēoh* originally meant *cattle*, and then property, since in early times cattle were the principal kind of property (Cf. *pecuniary*, from *pecus*, a herd.) “To ‘hold in fee’ or ‘fee-simple’ is a legal phrase signifying complete possession. So Milton describes Apollo and Diana as—

‘Latona’s twin-born progeny,  
Which after held the sun and moon in fee.’

And Shakespeare (*Macbeth*, iv. 3) speaks of a private sorrow as a fee-grief due to a single breast. The reference in the line is to the supremacy which Venice enjoyed over all the richest countries of the Lower Empire, and to the fact that she was before the discovery of the sea passage round the Cape of Good Hope, the great emporium of traffic between East and west.”—*Peterson.* **The gorgeous East**—In

the western mind the East is always associated with splendour. The phrase is borrowed from Milton :—

“Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand  
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.”

—*Par. Lost*, II. 3-4.

2. **The safe-guard of the West**—The naval power of Venice enabled her for a long time to protect Europe against invasions from the East. She also took a prominent part in the Crusades, supplying fleets and sinews of war and in the subsequent struggle against the advance of the Turks. Hence Byron calls her “Europe’s bulwark against the Ottomite” (*Childe Harold*, iv. 14). She crushed the fleet of the Turks in the great sea-fight of *Lepanto* (1517.) 3. *The worth...birth*—She proved herself worthy of her position as “the eldest child of Liberty.” 4. **The eldest...Liberty**—the first free Republic in Europe. The Venetian Republic was founded in the 5th century. The epithet alludes to the origin of Venice. In 452, the invasion of Italy by Attila forced many of the inhabitants of Venetia to leave the mainland and settle in the network of islands at the head of the Adriatic Sea. Thus Venice was built. 1—4. **Par.**—Venice was at one time in complete possession of the splendid empires of the East and protected Western Europe from (Ottoman) invasion. She was the first free city in Europe and she proved herself worthy of that position. 5. **Maiden city**—unconquered by the enemy. Cf. ‘Virgin scene’ (Nutting). *Bright*—glorious. 6. *Guile*—treachery. *Force*—violence. 7. *Took &c.*—accepted. 8. **Esponse**—take as a spouse, marry. *Must* is a past tense here. This alludes to the symbolical ceremony of marrying the sea, annually performed at Venice, when the Doge (the Chief Magistrate) of Venice dropped a wedding ring into the Adriatic.

"Every year the Doge, accompanied by a festive procession went in the state-galley, the Bucentaur, to the mouth of the harbour, and cast a ring into the sea in token that Venice had subjugated the Adriatic Sea as a spouse is subjugated to her lord." This custom originated in 1177, when Pope Alexander III. appealed to Venice for help against the German Emperor ; in gratitude for their naval assistance he sent the Doge a ring, with which he told him to wed the Adriatic. Cf. *Byron*—"The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord"—*Childe Harold*, iv. 11. 4—8. **Par.**—Venice was long a free and glorious city and defended her liberty successfully against both treachery and violence and wedded the only mate worthy of her—the eternal sea. 9. *And what if*—and what does it matter if &c. Even though her glory has failed, her titles have vanished &c., yet. *Had is*, used because the poet has been thinking of the time when Napoleon took possession of it ; at that time the real greatness of Venice had passed away, but still some shadow of departed greatness remained ; now even that shadow has vanished, but that is no reason why we should not mourn the disappearance of the shadow. 10. *Titles*—e. g. the eldest child of Liberty, the mistress of the Mediterranean, &c. *Strength*—her naval and commercial power. 11. *Tribute of regret*—token of grief, some expression of regret for her final downfall. 12 *Long life*—position of greatness enjoyed for about twelve centuries. 9—12. **Par.**—And even if at the time when Napoleon struck his blow at the city her past splendour was gone, her noble names had lost their propriety and her power had been extinct ; yet that is no reason why we should not grieve now that the 'shadow of her greatness' is itself also passing away. 13. **Men...grieve**—A reminiscence of two famous Latin lines.—'*H mo sum &c.*' (T. N.) I am a man, and all

that concerns man concerns me; and '*Sunt lacrimae &c.*' (T.N.)—

The kindly tear at human suffering springs,  
And mortal hearts are touched by mortal things.

14. Referring to her loss of independence and final extinction. 13—14. **Expl.**—*The poet gives the reason why we should regret the extinction of the Venetian Republic. As men, nothing affecting man can be a matter of indifference to us ; and we must needs sympathise with the decline and final extinction of Venetian glory.*

**Q. Give the argument of the poem.**

A. The poet recounts the former glories of Venice and laments the extinction of her independence.

## LONDON, 1802.

**Q. Give the date of the sonnet.**

A. It was written in Sept. 1802, the year of the 'short-lived peace of Amiens with France, and was first published in 1807.

**Q. Describe briefly the outlook of England in 1802.**

A. The outlook, both social and political, was a gloomy one. A few landowners became wealthy, but the poorer classes suffered owing to the increase in the price of wheat. The population was larger than in previous years. Poverty and crime increased together. It was also a time of reaction in politics; there was no progress, no political reform. This hopeless condition of the country inspired Wordsworth with as much bitterness and misanthropy as his nature was capable of. He was struck, he says, with the vanity and parade of England, as contrasted with the quiet, or even desolation, that the Revolution had produced in France; and compared the "mis-

chief engendered and fostered among us by undisturbed wealth" with the struggle carried on by the Spaniards for their deliverance from France.

**Q. Give the argument of the sonnet.**

A. The poet addresses Milton to whose life spent "as ever in his great Task-master's eye" he points his own generation for a rich example of that unselfish devotion to all life's duties, high or low, combined with a life in the ideal, which alone can give the inward happiness his countrymen have lost.

1—2. **Milton...thee**—The poet expresses a wish that Milton were still alive to show his fellow-countrymen an example of unselfish devotion to duty in the midst of their degradation. Having been disgusted with the French Revolution W. came back to England and lived in London from Aug. 30 to Sept. 22, 1802. But he found English people engaged in the sordid pursuit of wealth to the disregard of their duties. 2. *Fen*—low marshy land. *Stagnant*—standing, as opp. to *flowing*. The meaning is that England is in a miserably stationary condition without advancement—passing through a time of reaction. The individuals also are without any noble aspirations. Their interests are centred in selfishness. 3. **Alter &c.**,—stand for the various professions which use them *viz.*, the church, the army and literature. **Fireside**—This represents the domestic life which in a cold country must centre round the fire, the hearth. **The heroic wealth**—abstract for concrete ; wealthy men of noble lineage. In *heroic* some contempt may perhaps have been implied for the *wealth acquired by trade &c.*, which makes people selfish and mean. **Hall and bower**—lords and ladies. (See T. N.) 5. *Forfeited*—lost. *Ancient dower*—

which they had inherited from their ancestors. 6. *Inward happiness*—happiness arising from the cultivation of the inward nobility of character, as opposed to the pursuit of wealth. 1.—6. **Expl.**—*The poet refers to the degraded condition of England and recalls the powerful example of Milton who taught the way to greatness by the purity and simplicity of his life.* England about the year 1802 is in a deplorable condition. National life no longer flows in a healthy current; it is a period of reaction. The clergy, the military and literary men, the whole of society, have lost their happiness in the consciousness of inward worth, virtue and nobility of character which they inherited from their ancestors. True greatness can now be found only by a return to the purity and unselfish virtue of Milton. 7. *Raise*—*etc.*—*rescue* us from our degraded condition, lift us from the stagnant fen in which we are immersed. 8. *Manners*—courtesy springing from a chivalrous respect for our fellow-men. See T. N. *Virtue*—nobility of character. Milton lived a strictly pious life. *Freedom*—From 1640 to 1660 Milton wrote a series of pamphlets in defence of national liberty. **Power**—strength of personality. 6—8. **Expl.**—*The poet appeals to Milton whose strong personality stamped itself upon the spirit of his times and held out a powerful example of morality.* In 1802, England's liberty was in danger, morality was extinct, national life stagnant. Had Milton been living, he might have raised Englishmen to a higher level of morality and independence. As Milton infused morality into the degenerate times of the Stuarts and defended liberty, so he might have mended the morals of the English people about 1802. **Star**—not only in the *brilliancy* of his genius, but also in the *purity* of his life. **Dwelt apart**—His

high character and love of liberty marked him out as different from the common lot of men of his time. As a star shines above, untainted by the corruption of the world, so Milton exhibited his *inward nobility* free from sordid selfishness. This applies particularly to his last days after the Restoration when he lived in privacy, sought only by a very few friends like Dryden. 10. **Thou...sea**—reference to his stirring defence of national independence in his pamphlets, the *Iconoclastes*, *Areopagitica*, &c. As the voice of the sea is powerful, voluminous and vast, so his voice uttered in the cause of liberty was impressive, dignified and eloquent. 11. *Pure*—adj. to 'thou.' *Naked*—unclouded. 9—11—**Expl.**—*The poet bestows upon Milton one of the best eulogiums by way of contrast with the selfish men of his own time.* As a solitary star shines apart from others, so Milton lived in solitude with his nobility of character. His arguments in the cause of national independence were eloquent and impressive like the awe-inspiring boom of the sea. His personality was independent, vast and uncorrupted like the cloudless firmament. 12. *Travel* &c.—The course of life is compared to a path. **Life's...way**—the commonest duties of life. 13. **Cheerful godliness**—god-like greatness which could find delight in the humble duties of life. *And yet*—Though thou wast so grand a personality. *The...lay*—imposed upon itself the simplest duties. 12—14. **Expl.**—*The poet finds in Milton one exceptional mark of greatness, viz., that though he was a great man shining above the ordinary run of mankind, yet he willingly faced the common duties of life and did not find even the humblest duty inconsistent with his greatness—great as he was, no duty was too humble for him. [As Milton himself said in the Sonnet on his blindness:*

"Who best  
Bears his mild yoke, they serve him best."

## TO THE DAISY.

**Q. Give the date and history of the Poem.**

**A.**—It was composed in 1802, in the Orchard, Townend, Grasmere, and published in 1807.

**Q. Describe the 'Daisy'**

**A.**—*Daisy*—Day's *eye*, is a flower with a yellow centre and white petals like the rays of the sun. It grows in open grassy fields and flowers all the year round, most profusely in summer.

**St. 1.** *Here*—in the solitude of Grasmere. **Things...be**—the imposing sights and events of the busy world. *Again*—Referring to his first poem to the Daisy. **W.** had written two other poems on the same flower in the same year. *Talk to—*hold communion with. *Thou, &c.*—Thou deservest a poet's attention. The lines (from G. Wither) which the poet prefixed as a motto to this poem may apply to **W.** himself who could *draw an uncommon fund of delight from the simplest object of Nature* (Cf. his lines on *The Sparrow's Nest* and *To a Butterfly*):—

"Her divine skill taught me this,  
That from every thing I saw,  
I could some instruction draw,  
And raise pleasure to the height,  
Through the meanest object's sight."

**Unassuming commonplace**—An unpretending common thing. *Unassuming*—modest. Cf.—

"Comfort have thou of thy merit,  
Kindly unassuming spirit!—*To the Small Celandine.*

**Commonplace**—because the Daisy is found everywhere. *Homely*—plain-looking. *And yet, &c.*—though thou art a commonplace yet those who love thee find in thee some beauty. **Grace**—the beauty which a love finds in thee. Cf.—"The lover sees Helen's beauty in the brow of Egypt"—*Shakespeare.*



*Makes*—constructs with the help of the imagination. **Expl.**—*The poet declares his love of the Daisy.* In the solitude of Grassmere, where he has none of the grand spectacles of the busy world to draw his sight and no imposing event to demand his activity, the poet again comes to hold communion with the lovely Daisy. The flower deserves his praise. Though it is simple and modest, having no striking grace, yet those who care for such a common object of nature as the Daisy, would find in its very plain appearance a beauty which others will fail to see.

St. 2.—*Dappled*—(variegated like the apple) spotted. *Turf*—sod. *Dappled turf*—the grass-plot variegated with different colours, viz. the yellow and white of the daisy and the green of the grass. *At ease*—comfortably—in an attitude of calm reflection. The poet is fond of this attitude. Cf. *Lines written in Early Spring*, St. 1., and *Hart-leap Well*. 99. **Play with similes**—indulge in the sport of fancy, creating fanciful images which the daisy may resemble; amuse myself in inventing similes. *Similes*—comparisons, analogies. **Loose types**—irregular comparisons. The daisy does not resemble in all respects the images (of nuns, maidens, &c.) which I invent. These images are only general symbols which may call up some of the striking characteristics of the flower. *Type*—token, sign or symbol. Cf. *To a Skylark*, l. 11. **Through all decrees**—Similes borrowed from all grades of existence, reality (nun, maiden, &c.) and fiction (the Cyclops). *Thoughts...raising*—thoughts which thou givest rise to, ideas suggested by thee. **Fond**—foolish, as usually in old English, and still in the North. “Thou *fond* mad woman” (*Richard II.* v. ii, 95.) So *Coriol.* iv. i. 26. Chaucer uses “*fonne*” for a fool. In present usage the word has

acquired a better meaning, the idea of folly originally so predominant in it being diminished. *Idle name*—epithet given in the *play* of fancy; fictitious analogues. *For praise or blame*—some of these appellations praise thee and others seem to *imply* blame, e. g., the simile of Cyclops threatening and defying. *Humour...game*—freak of fancy.

**Expl.**—*The poet describes how the sight of the daisy has set his fancy playing.* He often sits in a mood of reverie upon the grass-plot profusely dotted with the yellow daisy and amuses himself with inventing similes appropriately describing the flower. These analogues which are suggested by the daisy do not closely and accurately describe the flower but refer to some of its most prominent characteristics. They are drawn from the realms of both Truth and Fiction and from all grades of life. These similes are mostly foolish and vain, and some of them praise the flower, while others tend to degrade its beauty according to the freaks of the poet's fancy. **St. 3. Nun**—A woman devoted to a religious life secluded from the world, under a vow of perpetual chastity. *Demure*—modest. Cf. Spenser, "With countenance *demure* and modest grace." *Demure*. The root of the latter part of the word appears in "moral" (L. *mores*.) *Lowly port*—humble bearing, unassuming demeanour. *Port*—behaviour (L. *porto*, to carry,) the way in which one carries or bears oneself. *Sprightly*—spirit-like, lively, gay. **Of Love's court**—a follower of the goddess of love, one under the sway of love. In the *Prologue* to the *Legende of Good Women* Chaucer has given a delightful account of his admiration for the daisy. With its *heart of gold* and its *white crown* of innocence it is the type of a good woman to the poet. **The sport &c.**—the play-thing of the wanton wind. *Rubies*—'Ruby' is liter-

ally a red colour. The common Daisy is yellow and white.

**A starveling &c.**—The daisy is likened to a wretched poorly clad beggar on account of its having a single whorl of petals, unlike the rose which has many rows of petals, one above another. This is one of the names of “blame” referred to in l. 14. *Scanty vest*—insufficient clothing. *Appellations*—names. **Expl.**—*The poet here gives some of the similes with which his fancy loves to play about the Daisy.* It may be likened (1) to a modest nun of humble bearing (The flower grows on the grass and has an unassuming appearance like that of a nun); (2) to a damsel, a follower of the goddess of love, whose simplicity makes her the sport of wanton lovers (similarly the Daisy is the sport of the wind); (3) to a queen with her head encircled with a crown of rubies and (4) to a poorly clad beggar on account of its single row of petals. All these images may be applied to the Daisy according to their suitability.

Str. 4. **Cyclops**—Round-eye—is the name Homer gives to a race of one-eyed giants whom he makes Odysseus (Ulysses) encounter on his way home (Ithaca) from Troy (after the Trojan war.) *The freak*—the “humour of the game”—the whimsical play of the fancy. *The shape*—sc. of the Cyclops. *Behold!*—an exclamation of unexpected joy. **Silver shield**—the white petals arranged in a circle resembling a shield. **Boss of gold**—a golden knob; this is the yellow spot in the centre of the daisy. *Spreads itself*—the petals ramify from the central yellow spot. *To cover*—protect. The flower is compared to a shield on the shoulder of a fairy and protecting him. **Expl.**—*The poet continues describing the creatures which his fancy has made out of the daisy.* It seems to resemble the round eye of the Cyclops with its expression of threat and defiance. The circular flower is like the circular

eye of the Cyclops. But at the next moment the image of the Cyclops melts away leaving that of a white silver shield with a central knob of gold. The flower then is fancied to be a shield carried for defence by a fairy. Its spreading white petals are like a silver shield and its central yellow spot is like the boss of gold in the centre of the shield. *Str. 5. Glittering crest*—bright rays resembling the shining crest of a helmet. **Self-poised**—balanced of itself, suspended in the air. The stalk of the daisy is so slender that it cannot be seen from a distance and the flower seems to hang in the air. Cf. *To a Butterfly*, l. 2. *Nest*—home. *Reprove*—chide. **Expl.**—*The poet lastly likens the daisy to a star.* Seen from a distance the flower resembles a shining star not quite so beautiful as many glittering in the sky above, but yet its petals are like the rays of a star and as its slender stalk is invisible, it seems to rest, being suspended in the air—A man who would be so unfeeling as to find fault with this gentle flower does not deserve the enjoyment of domestic felicity and peace of mind. *Str. 6. Reveries*—fanciful creations, likening the daisy to a nun, a queen, a starveling, &c. *Cleave fast*—stick closely. *Creature*—W. in his characteristic way endows the flower with consciousness. *Repair*—refresh when wearied. The poet describes the soothing influence of Nature in more general terms in the following lines :—

"I have owed to them,  
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,  
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;  
And passing even into my purer mind  
With tranquil restoration."—*Tintern Abbey*.

*Meek nature*—modesty. In his "Education of Nature" W. minutely describes how a mind grows under the influence of Nature, how the beauties of the inanimate world are assimilated by Lucy.

" The floating clouds their state shall lend  
To her, for her the willows bend, &c, &c."

**Expl.**—*The poet describes the tranquillising influence of the Daisy.* Having exhausted the fund of his similes he again comes back to the simple name of the flower. The freaks of his fancy are now over and he will call it again a 'sweet flower' and stick closely to this name. It is to him not an inanimate flower but a charming, little, modest creature which breathes the same air with him. When he is wearied with the 'fretful stir unprofitable' of life it will soothe his troubled heart and impart to him a portion of its characteristic humility.

**Q. Mention the similes which the poet applies to the Daisy and explain them.** **A.** See *Notes*.

### STEPPING WESTWARD.

**Q. When was the poem composed and when published?**

**A.** Dorothy W.'s Journal gives the 11th of September, 1803, as the date of the incident upon which the poem is based. It was composed between 1803 and 1805, and first published in 1807.

**Q. In what circumstance did the poem originate?**

**A.** The circumstance is thus given in a note by the author:—'While my fellow traveller [his sister Dorothy] and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, on our road to a hut, where, in the course of our tour we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed women, one of whom said to us by way of greeting, 'What, you are stepping westward?''

(The poet has beautifully adapted an expression common in Perth and other parts of Scotland, by which any distant place, whatever its direction, is described as 'doon Wast,' so that "you are stepping West" would be equivalent to "you are going far?"—Turner.)

St. 1: *Yea*—the older and more solemn form of acquiescence. **Wildish**—The suffix *ish* is used either to form an adjective from a substantive, as in *foolish*, *childish*, or is added, as here, to an adjective to weaken or modify its meaning. The latter use is *colloquial*, and gives here the effect of a *coined* word. *Roam*—wander about. **Guests of chance**—obliged to depend upon chance for food and shelter in our roamings. *Such a sky*—such a glowing sky. The setting sun is more gorgeous than the rising sun. It was the time after sunset and all the light that there was, would naturally be in the west, while the east was already growing dark with the gathering shades of approaching night. **Expl.**—*One of the well-dressed girls the poet and his sister met in their walk by the side of Loch Katrine said to them by way of greeting "What you are stepping westward?"* The vagueness of the word 'westward' (associated with indefinite distance) might indicate vague, chanced wanderings in a strange land, far from home, trusting to chance for food and shelter they wanted. This would make their lot seem likely to be a rough one. The vagueness of the question might suggest the fancy that the poet and his sister were wandering on to an infinite distance without a purpose or a home. But with such a gorgeous western sky in the front, yet glowing with the departed sun, no one could hesitate or fear to advance into the infinite region of light thus leading them on. [Goethe in the *Faust* gives a beautiful description of sun-set. "Oh that I have no wing to

lift me from the ground, to struggle after, for ever after, him ! I should see in ever-lasting evening beams the stilly world at my feet—every height on fire, every vale in repose—the silver brook flowing into golden streams. \* \* \* I hurry on to drink his everlasting light, *the day before me and the night behind.*”] **St. 2. Dewy ground**—ground covered with dew at the approach of night. **Dark**—with the gathering shades of night. **Cold**—as the sun has set. **Heavenly destiny**—future pointing to Heaven. Wandering westward was like wandering into heaven. **I liked &c.**—The simple question of the girl lifted the poet for a time from his immediate surroundings and gave him a passport to heaven. **’Twas...bound**—The very vagueness of the greeting was full of meaning to the poet. It suggested an indefinite, limitless journey. **Spiritual right**—A right independent of worldly considerations, a privilege which cannot be accounted for by any earthly claim. It is a right which belongs to the initiated few, opposed to *legal or moral right*,—a mysterious privilege of entering the bright, heavenly region beyond. The glorious beyond has a peculiar, supernatural charm for the poet. The brightness of the limitless view spread before him seems to invite him to advance on and on till he would be admitted into heaven itself. **Expl.**—*The poet contrasts the bright sky ahead and the dark, dewy ground behind.* The ground behind was already covered with gathering dew ; it was cold and in gloom ; but the western sky in front was glowing with the beauty of the setting sun. *The poet then, with true Wordsworthian skill, proceeds to draw out the spiritual meaning of the scene.* The bright western sky seemed to point the way to heaven. The soft sympathetic greeting, coming as it did beneath the glowing sky, in a strange land, had something spiritual about it. It

seemed "to link man's momentary greetings with the grand cosmic spectacles of heaven" (Myers.) Thus the poet welcomed this greeting which by its very vagueness set no limits to his journey but seemed to grant him the spiritual passport to travel through that heavenly region in front. [The poet institutes a similar contrast between the glowing ahead and the gloomy behind in his *Lines written while Sailing in a Boat at Evening* :—

"How richly glows the water's breast  
Before us, tinged with evening hues,  
While, facing thus the crimson west,  
The boat her silence course pursues !  
And see how dark the backward stream !"]

ST. 3. *Voice &c.* See Dorothy W.'s description, T. N. *She &c.*—one of the neatly dressed women whom the poet and his sister met near Loch Katrine. *Native lake*—Loch Katrine, to the south-west of Perth, on the border of Stirling and between Ben Ledi and Ben Lomond. *Salutation*—greeting. *The very sound*—the truest ring. *Courtesy*—politeness. **Enwrought**—or inwrought ; lit. worked one material into another, so as to form one fabric. **Human sweetness**—the charm of human sympathy. **The echo...way. Expl.**—The sound of female voice infused a human element into the thought of indefinite journey to heaven which the scene gave me. The thought of a journey without goal into the limitless beyond would inspire one with a vague sense of mystery, something unearthly or supernatural. But the sound of the woman's sympathetic greeting took away the unearthliness associated with the thought of indefinite journey and made it more charming. **Travelling...way**—For the feeling of these two lines we may compare—

"For my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sun-set, and to bathe



Of all the western stars, until I die."

—Tennyson, *Ulysses*.

And—"Wheresoe'er the sun may visit,  
We'll be gay, whate'er betide ;  
To make room for wandering is it  
That the world is made so wide,"

—Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*.

(Carlyle's translation.)

**Expl.**—*The poet describes the effect of the greeting as coming from a woman.* The greeting was spoken too in a soft voice, by one who was a native of the lake-side and seemed to have the truest ring of politeness. The poet could not but feel its strong appealing influence ; and while he gazed at that bright sky the sound of her voice mingled the sweetness of human sympathy with the thought of the endless journey before him—the pilgrimage into unknown space seemed to have a peculiar charm for him when associated with the sweet voice of human sympathy urging him on in his imaginary journey.

**Q. Give the argument of the poem.**

**A.** The poet with a few light touches sketches a scene of impressive contrast—the dewy ground all dark and cold behind and the bright sky ahead—the gloomy retrospect and the glowing front. He then draws out the spiritual meaning of this scene, the heavenly destiny of which it speaks. The simple question of the Highland girl "What, you are stepping westward?" expressed in a quaint sympathetic manner, suggests the thought of an endless journey into the bright region before him.

**Q. How does this poem illustrate Wordsworth's method?**

**A.** A critic has answered this question : "There is enough dimly to suggest the features of the scene, but only to suggest

them—a glory in front, a dewy gloom behind ; at one side a still and glooming lake, and all around a measureless peace. Another poet would have told us what rocks bordered the lake, what trees overhung it, and how many mountain ranges rose in the distance. That is, he would have painted a landscape ; but Wordsworth was contented with a single passage from Nature's Book of Truth."

### THE SOLITRAY REAPER.

**Q. When was this poem composed ? What suggested the thought of the poem ?**

**A.** It owes its occasion to a tour in the Highlands in 1803 after the poet's marriage. He was accompanied by his sister Dorothy. She says that the poem was suggested to her brother by a beautiful sentence in Thomas Wilkiuson's, *Tour in Scotland*. The sentence is this : " Passed a female who was reaping alone ; she sang in Erse, as she bended over her sickle ; the sweetest human voice I ever heard ; her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more."

**St. I.** *Behold...field*—" It was harvest time, and the fields were quietly—might I be allowed to say pensively ?—enlivened by small companies of reapers. It is not uncommon in the Highlands to see a single person so employed."—Miss Wordsworth's *Journal*. *Yon*—shorter from of *yonder*, often used in poetry. *Lass*—the word is common in Scotland for a young woman. *Stop*—to listen to her. *Gently*—without disturbing her. *A melancholy strain*—a sad song. *Profound vale*—deep valley, yet hardly able to contain the sound. *Overflowing &c.*—The deep, narrow valley is soon filled with the sound and then the sound flows out into the open air. The

idea of a sound filling a place and then overflowing it occurs in Tennyson :—

“ And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds  
Were flooded over with echoing song.”

—*The Dying Swan.*

**Par.**—The ‘ *Solitary Reaper* ’ is brought before the reader in all her simplicity. Yonder, says the poet, is a Highland girl reaping all by herself in the field and singing to herself as she works. Stop to listen to her or softly pass by without disturbing her. Whilst she cuts and binds the corn into bundles without any one to help her she sings a sad song. Listen to her ; for the song is so rich in melody that it overflows the valley deep as it is—the deep valley can scarcely contain the sound. [Note how the idea of solitude is emphasised by repetition—The lass is *single* in the field ; she is *solitary* ; she sings *by herself* ; *alone* she cuts and binds the grain.]

Str. 2. *No nightingale &c.*—Cf. the description of Kents :—

“ The voice I heard this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown  
Perhaps the selfsame song that found a path  
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;  
The same that at times bath  
Charmed magic casements opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn.”

—*Ode to the Nightingale.*

*Chant*—sing. *Welcome*—acceptable, eagerly sought after.

**Shady haunt**—a place resorted to by travellers for the leafy shade it offers in the midst of the barren desert ; an oasis.

*Thrilling*—lit. that which causes a quivering sensation like that of *drilling* or boring, hence exquisitely pleasurable.

*Cuckoo*—The poet’s favourite bird. **Silence of the seas**—the solitude of the waters. Cf.—

"We were the first that ever burst  
 Into that silent sea,"  
 Again—"And we did speak only to break  
 The silence of the sea."—Coleridge, *Ancient Mariner*.

**Farthest Hebrides**—The *Hebrides* are a cluster of islands on the north-west of Scotland, and like Virgil's *Ultima Thule* are often used generally for the limit of the world. So in Milton, *Lycidas*—"Beyond the stormy Hebrides."

**Par.**—*With a few characteristic touches the poet impresses upon us the delicious melody of the Reaper's song. Her song is compared to that of two of Nature's best warblers, the nightingale and the cuckoo. It was as charming as the song of the nightingale to weary travellers when heard in some woody oasis in the midst of the Arabian desert; and as exquisitely exciting as that of the cuckoo's voice disturbing the deep solitude of the seas among the remote Hebridean Isles.*

**St. 3.** *Will...sings?*—the girl was singing in a language which the poet did not understand. *Plaintive*—mournful; melancholy. **Numbers**—used in the poetry of the Classical School in the sense of the Latin *numere*, for verses, poetry, or poetic rhythm, or song. The use of this word for "song" or "melody" shows that Wordsworth could not shake himself wholly free from the stilted words and phrases of the Classical School against which his poetry was a protest. *Flow*—are poured forth. The figure of a 'flowing liquid' has been already applied to sound in l. 8. **Old...things**—the song perhaps relates to tales of sorrow in the remote past, or deals with some ancient battle. *Things*—events. *More humble*—something about domestic life, and therefore more touching than stories of battle or sorrow in the distant past. *Lay*—song. *Of to-day*—every-day occurrence in the present day. *Natural*—common. *That...again*—which occurs at all times. **Par.**—*The*

*girl sings in an unknown tongue which the poet cannot understand. He therefore gives his own conjecture about the subject of the song.* The melancholy strain may relate to ancient battles and troubles, or deals perhaps with some unfortunate sorrow or loss of every-day life which occurred in the past and may occur again. *St. 4. Theme—subject. As if...ending—*as if she could never weary of her song. *Sickle—*a curved instrument used for cutting corn. *Motionless—*without stirring. This indicates the powerful effect of her song. The poet while listening to it was rooted as it were to the spot.

**The music &c.**—The song produced a powerful effect upon his heart. It was stirred to its inmost depths. The melody was retained in the poet's mind long after the song was heard ~~no~~ more, like the echo of a sound in a long row of vaults in a deep cavern. *In my heart &c.*—Wordsworth was indeed one

“Whose memory was as a dwelling-place  
For all sweet sounds and harmonies.”

**Par.**—*Whatever the subject of the Reaper's song may have been, its melody itself has stirred the poet's soul to its inmost depths.* Although the subject of the song was unintelligible to the poet yet the manner of her singing could not fail to be striking. She sang with such a devotion of her heart that it seemed as if the song would never end. The poet listened to it in silent rapture while she sang as she worked with her sickle. The effect of the song was so great that even after he mounted a long distance up the hill and it ceased to be heard, the music, apart from the sense, was carried in his heart.

### ROB ROY'S GRAVE.

Q. **When was the poem composed?**

A. Between 1803, and 1805, and first published in 1807.

**Q. Who was Rob Roy ?**

**A. Rob Roy** ( *i. e.*, Robert the Red, so called on account of his red hair ) was a celebrated Highland free-booter, whose true name was Robert Macgregor, but who assumed his mother's family name, Campbell, on account of the outlawry of the Clan Macgregor by the Scotch Parliament in 1662. He was born between 1660 and 1665. He was the younger son of Donald Macgregor of Glengyle, by his wife, a daughter of Campbell of Glenfalloch. His own designation was of Inversnaid, he seems to have acquired a right to the property of Craig Royston, on the east side of Loch Lomond. Like other highland gentlemen Rob Roy was a trader in cattle previous to the rebellion of 1715 in which he joined the adherents of the Pretender. On the suppression of the rebellion the Duke of Montrose, with whom Rob Roy had previously had a quarrel, took the opportunity to deprive him of his estates ; and the latter began to indemnify himself by a war of reprisals upon the property of the Duke. An English garrison was stationed at Inversnaid, not far from Aberfoyle, the residence of Rob Roy ; but his activity and courage saved him from the hands of his enemies from whom he continued for sometime to levy black-mail. In his latter days he became reconciled to Montrose and lived more peacefully until his death at Bulquhider in 1735.

**ST. 1. Robin Hood**—the hero of a cycle of popular ballads, was, according to tradition, an outlaw commanding a band of free-booters in Sherwood forest in the reign of Richard I. His chief companions were his lieutenant Little John, his chaplain Friar Tuck, William Scadlock, George-a-Green, Much the Miller's son, and Maid Marian. Stow, writing in 1590, and doubtless giving the popular story, tells us that " he

suffered no woman to be oppressed...poor men's goods he spared, abundantly relieving them with that which by theft he got from the abbeys and the houses of rich old carles." It is however doubtful at what time he lived, or indeed whether he existed at all. No contemporary historian mentions him : he is first alluded to in *Piers the Plowman* and the earliest chronicle which speaks of him is the *Scotichronicon* (14th and 15th C.) An inscription is said to have been found on a tomb at Kirklees in Yorkshire in which he is called the Earl of Huntingdon, and the date of his death is given as 1247 ; but this is apocryphal. Thierry thought he was chief of a Sax-on band warring against the Norman oppressor ; Grimm, that he was purely mythical. It has been attempted to identify him with a "Robin Hood" who served as "porteur" to Edward II in 1223, but the evidence is very weak. **Ballad-singer's joy**—whose exploits the ballad singers of England love to relate. The earliest ballads concerning him date from Edward III; Wyuken de Worde published the *Lytel Geste of Robin Hood* in 1495. **Ballad**—a term applied loosely to compositions of the song type originally accompanied with dancing (It. *ballare*, to dance.) There are principally two classes of ballads :—(a) *The Outlaw Ballads*, dealing with the exploits of outlaws like Robin Hood, and (b.) *The Border Ballads*, dealing with raids and forays on the Border between England and Scotland, e.g., the Ballad of *Chevy Chase*. **As good**—equally kind-hearted. Both Robin Hood and Rob Roy robbed the rich and relieved the poor. "Like Robin Hood of England, he was a kind and gentle robber, and while he took from the rich, was liberal in relieving the poor."—Scott's introduction to *Rob Roy*. *Outlaw*—one who is excluded from the law or deprived of its protec-

tion ; a free-booter. *At daring mood*—of an equally fearless disposition. *She*—Scotland. *Clear the weeds &c.*—Wordsworth wrongly thinks that Rob Roy's grave was near the head of Loch Katrine. Hence he speaks of it as covered with weeds. But Rob Roy was buried at the eastern end of the Church at Balquhiddy, where his grave was marked by a sculptured stone. *Chant*—sing. *Passing*—occasional, in passing. **Stave**—(Icel. *stef*, a strophe) a staff or metrical portion, a stanza. **1—3 Par.**—*The poet puts forward a plea for singing in honour of Rob Roy.* Robin Hood, whose daring exploits the ballad-singers of England love to celebrate is a famous man. But Scotland has an Outlaw of an equally dauntless disposition in Rob Roy. Hence the poet proposes to give a passing tribute to his memory by singing a song on his grave from which the weeds of several years should now be cleared off, i. e., his name should be raised from oblivion.

St. 2. *Dauntless heart*—fearless disposition. Cf. “daring mood” in 1. 4. *Wondrous length &c.*—His arms were disproportionately long, so much so that he could without stooping tie the garters of his Highland hose which was placed two inches below the knee. *Nor...harm*—his great desire was as much to punish his enemies as to protect his friends. *Craved*—longed for. *Quell*—(Sax. *cwellan*, to kill) subdue, crush. **9—12. Par.** *The poet enumerates Rob Roy's virtues.* He was gifted by God with a fearless disposition and a wonderful length and strength of arm. But he never abused his strength. He desired as much to crush his enemies as to protect his friends from injury. St. 3. **Forgive—strong**—To call Rob Roy *wise* may be going too far. His wisdom as embodied in his moral principles given below may not be called wisdom by some. Yet the poet claims a



license. **13--16. Par.**—*The poet adds wisdom to, Rob Roy's virtues*, but immediately after craves the reader's pardon for having applied to the outlaw a quality to which his claim might appear doubtful to some. But he takes refuge in *poetic license* which must be granted to a poet who would relate the exploits of the great Rob Roy. Such a poet cannot but occasionally use a bold expression. **St. 4. Then—**since a poet worthy of Rob Roy must scorn timid epithets. **Principles of things**—principles or general laws underlying actual experience, rules reduced from experience as opposed to those formulated in statute-books. **Sought**—looked for. **Moral creed**—the moral rules by which to guide himself. **Creed**—a definite summary of what is believed. **17--20. Expl.**—*The poet explains why he called Rob Roy wise.* Since a poet worthy of Rob Roy must use bold epithets it may be said that he was as wise in thought as daring in his exploits. The rules by which he guided himself in his actions were all generalised from the principles underlying actual things in the world rather than from law-books. He accepted as his guiding principle the rule that *might is right*, although it was against the spirit of the law in the abstract.

**St. 5. Generous**—ironically applied to Rob Roy because he was liberal in his views on law—he dispensed with all statute law as unnecessary. **Statutes**—The *Acts* of the legislature. **They stir...ourselves**—The whole statute-law is a blunder. It is the cause of great harm. It interferes with the natural claims of persons. When one person who is by *might* entitled to a thing is deprived of it by another according to the operation of the law he opposes it by inflicting harm upon the usurper. Hence the law stirs or excites one person against

selves too ; for it opposes our natural impulse to do what is in our might. It resists the spontaneous operation of our natural impulses, thus breeding rebellion in human nature itself.

**21.—4. Expl.** *The poet shows how Rob Roy reasoned to prove the worthlessness of the statute-law.*—With characteristic liberality of mind the freebooter recommended the destruction of the entire collection of statute-laws. They are, in his opinion, positively harmful. They breed discontent and opposition among mankind. Whenever one person is according to the operation of the law deprived of a thing to which he is justly entitled according to the principle of "might is right," he will naturally have recourse to violence to protect his own right. Worse than this, the statute law imposes a check upon the spontaneity of human nature. It resists the natural inclination of man to assert his own right by strength of arm.

**St. 6. Passion**—a violent instinct. Hobbes has pointed out that "the state of nature is a state of warfare." Man naturally strives to assert his own right and hence the primitive state is essentially one of violence, one man fighting another for self-interest. **Make a law**—create a system of rules to check the naturally egoistic impulse of man. The institution of society and law is first meant to teach man to respect the rights of others ; and laws are supported by *sansctions*, i. e., an organised system of rewards and punishments. **Too false**—based upon a wrong principle. The true principle of guidance is that underlying actual experience, viz., that might is right. *Guide us*—direct us in the path of right action, i. e., action calculated to promote the general good. *Control us*—oppose our natural impulse to assert our strength. *Fight*—oppose those who force their legal claims against our natural instinct to identify right with might. *Bitterness of soul*

--vexation of spirit. **25 - 8. Expl.**—*Rob Roy shows that statute law is based upon a false principle.* Man's instinct is primarily egoistic ; it tends violently to assert its own claims against those of others. Hence one man is naturally inclined to fight another. Law is instituted to teach man that the gratification of this instinctive impulse to promote selfishness should be subordinated to the general interest. The principle underlying this institution of law is fallacious for it ignores the strong tendency of man to assert might against all opposition. The consequence is that this artificial legal system fails to be binding upon us. It can neither guide us in the path of right nor deter us from wrong. And the law itself is the cause of conflict and violence. Whenever any person asserts his claim under law against our stronger claim of might we hinder the operation of the law with uncompromising opposition and vexation of spirit.

**St. 7. Puzzled**—perplexed (to find the contradictions into which the law forces us.) We institute law to curb violence, but find that the law itself becomes a fruitful source of trouble. **Blinded**—left without a clear guiding principle. **Lose**—fail to see. **Distinctions**—between strength and weakness, that the strong should prosper and the weak suffer. **Plain and few**—simple and general. The principle that 'might is right' is simple enough and sums up the correct rule in the fewest words possible. This short and simple principle is to be contrasted with the elaborate and cumbrous bundle of state-laws. **These**—distinctions. **Graven on my heart**—clearly impressed upon my mind. That 'might is right' is learnt from intuition. It is a natural principle revealed by the unerring testimony of self-consciousness and is opposed to the artificial principle of statute-law which serves only to darken obvious dis-

tinctions. *That*—my heart. **29—32. Expl**—*Having exposed the falsity of the principle underlying statute-law, the Outlaw proceeds to enunciate what in his opinion is the right principle.* We are bewildered to find that the law which we invent becomes itself the source of conflict and trouble, and fails to guide us, that it darkens the plainest distinctions of actual experience, *viz.*, that the strong should prosper, and the weak should die out. The true principle is that revealed by the clear light of our own nature. It is stamped upon our heart, and affords the surest guide to right action. This is the principle that *might is right*. **St. 8.** *Rob Roy here adduces evidence in support of the true principle of action which he has enunciated.* If you wish to convince yourself of the truth of this principle, see that all creatures follow the rule of might. Strife or opposition is soon set at rest among all the creatures of God—all those that live in water, in fields or in the air. Their strife is promptly settled by the simple rule of might. The strong vanquish the weak, who soon die out. Hence these creatures live in peace of mind, free from the bitterness of soul which the artificial statute-law breeds. **St. 9. For way ?**—In Old English there is a form for *why* or for *whi* (—because), where *why* or *whi* is the old instrumental case of the relative pronoun *who*. The expression for *why*, used here as equivalent to the interrogative *wherefore*, occurs in old ballad poetry and in modern imitations of it. Cf. Cowper—

“He lost them sooner than at first :

*For why ?*—they were too big.”—*John Gilpin*.

*Sufficeth*—is sufficient for, is enough to serve their ends.

*Old rule*—principle followed from primitive existence. **37...**

**40. Par.**—*Rob Roy accounts for the peace of mind which is*

*enjoyed by the creatures of flood and field, of earth and air. They know not what bitterness of soul means—they live in peace of mind, because they follow the simple and general rule that the strong should dispossess the weak and maintain their right against the weak—a rule followed from the oldest times.*

St. 10. *Signal*—a sign to follow, a guiding principle. *Which...see*—which is clear and self-evident to all creatures, opposed to the dispensation of law, the justice of which is not always evident. *Here*—in the pursuit of the principle of might.

**Wanton cruelty**—freakish violence. There is no useless bloodshed in this state of things. The weak patiently submit to their inferior position knowing fully that they do not deserve any better. Thus much chafing of spirit is saved. **41-44**

**Expl.**—*In this and the two following stanzas Rob Roy points out the usefulness of the principle of might. He has shown that law defeats its own purpose, and now goes on to show by contrast that his principle is not attended with any of the drawbacks which are inseparable from Law. It is a rule which is learnt in a short time and so clear and evident that everyone can see it in the light of consciousness as established beyond all doubt. Hence all needless violence is checked. The weak patiently school themselves to their position of inferiority as natural and inevitable; and so there is no bitterness of opposition, no vexation of spirit in this state of things.*

St. 11. *Freakishness*—caprice. *Aspires*—craves a position higher than his due. *Measure*—capacity, extent. *Fashions*—adapts. **45-8.** **Expl.**—*Rob Roy points out the healthy consequence of the rule of strength. It curbs mental caprice, the tendency of the mind to wander away into vain ambitious dreams. The weak are taught to check their vain desire of*

rising to a position higher than their due. Thus all persons under the healthy influence of this principle learn to adapt their desires to their strength, *i. e.*, not to allow their mind to cherish aspirations which are not warranted by their strength. The strong entertain ambitious thoughts and the weak are contented with their humble condition.

St. 12. *Hinds*—The females of the red deer or stag. *Stand*—maintain their position by might. *Fall*—lose their position by weakness. *Process or wit*—physical or mental strength. The rule of might does not assert mere brute force. Mental strength is as necessary as physical. *Appointment*—dispensation. *Sway*—govern. **49-52. Expl.**—The principle of might receives support from the fact of daily experience that all creatures are governed by it. The strongest always maintain a high position and the weakest are doomed to a lower one. God ordains who is to rule and who to obey. The principle does not mean however that brute force will win. The might upon which it insists is both physical and mental.

St. 13. **Longest—day**—The longest life is short. Life even the longest, is evanescent. *Ends*—objects. *Maintain*—preserve. *Shortest way*—the easiest means to obtain my ends. **53—56. Expl.**—*Having exhibited the logic of the principle of might Rob Roy proposes to adopt it as the guiding principle of his life.* Since the rule of might and right is clear and self-evident, and life, even the longest, is short, Rob Roy will follow this rule as the guiding principle of his life, to obtain his object, and preserve his right. All other rules will be cumbersome and round-about. The shortness of life requires a guiding principle which will combine simplicity and directness; and such a principle is that of might which is preferable to any other.

St. 14. **Par.**—Having then adopted as his rule of life the maxim that might is right, Rob Roy lived a rough life, among the rocks, in all seasons, in summer and winter. The eagle was lord of the birds in the sky, and Rob Roy was the lord of men upon the earth.

St. 15. *So was it*—Rob Roy was lord below. *Would have been*—had there been no *Polity*. **Untowardness of fate**—the froward dispensation of destiny. *Untoward*—not easily guided, perverse. **Polity**—the form or constitution of civil government ; civil constitution. **He came...late**—Rob Roy's principles could not be carried out at the time when he flourished, for the law was too strong for him—had he been born earlier when law was not so severe, he might have freely followed his lawless principle. **61.—4. Expl.** *Rob Roy was lord of the earth, or rather would have been so, but for the irony of fate.* For at the time when he flourished, the established laws of society and state visited his actions with disapproval and punished them. Had he been born earlier, when the law was not so severe, he might have unquestionably asserted his might.

St. 16. **Expl.**—To Wordsworth the present time has been one of lawlessness marked by the fanaticism of the revolutionists in France. Hence it is the fit time for Rob Roy. He was born rather too early. The time was uncongenial to his genius. Had he been born in the present time he might assert his power independent of all opposition. All his activities might operate unhampered. Had he lived in these days he would have been a resistless conqueror like Napoleon. As a tree flourishes with buds on every bough so Rob Roy would have flourished with all his powers unchecked.

ST. 17. **Rent**—A compensation or return in the shape of money, or labour, to a lord for the possession of a corporeal hereditament. **Factors**—Bailiffs or managers of an estate. **Rights of chase**—game laws, or laws for the preservation of animals like the deer. **Chase**—An open hunting ground to which game resorts, and which is private property, thus differing from a forest, which is not private property, and from a park, which is inclosed. **Sheriff**—(shire-reeve) The chief officer of a shire or county, to whom is intrusted the execution of the laws. **Lairds**—Landholders under the degree of a knight or squire. **Domains**—estates. **Paltry**—Mean, worthless. **Par**.—Had Rob Roy liyed in these days he would in a short time have done away with all systems and laws which limit the activity of free-booters. He would have destroyed rent-laws, managers of estates, the restriction upon poachers, the sheriffs of counties, landholders and their estates as despicable things, which might be swept away all in a moment.

ST. 18. **Par**.—Then Rob Roy would not have confined himself to a few valleys of Scotland. The whole world would have been the sphere of his activity. He would have thought how wide the world was, and how admirably congenial the time was to his mind, how it furthered his lawless purposes.

ST. 19. *Sovereign will*—supreme resolve ; commanding determination. *Exect*—carry out. **Law and fact**—Things as they ought to be and things as they actually are (Cf. *de jure* and *de facto*.) The term ‘law’ in jurisprudence has a peculiar use in contrast with ‘fact.’ Law is a technical point to be determined by reference to the established system of procedure prescribed by the legislature. **Fact** is a question of actual occurrence to be determined by evidence



based upon experience. Rob Roy makes his own distinction of *law* and *fact*. The law is the enactment of the state ; *fact* is the experiential principle of *might is right* **Par.**—Rob Roy would have commanded his sword to carry out his supreme resolve throughout half the earth and decide all questions of dispute between law and fact, *i.e.*, whenever any doubt arose as to an act of law and the principle of might, the law would have been swept away and the principle of might asserted with the sword. All lawless despots care for things as they makes them to be and not as they ought to be. They are *de facto* lords of the earth though not by right. They swept away all law and order.

**St. 20.** *Fatherly concern*—paternal solicitude. **Par.**—Rob Roy would have said to his sword ! “It behoves us to acquit ourselves in a proper manner that all mankind should learn that it is for their good that the rule of might is imposed upon them.” Rob Roy means that his sword is to be rightly used and it is nothing but paternal care that prompts him thus to levy a lawless war against mankind.

**St. 21.** **Expl.**—Rob Roy assumes the function of a reformer and states his reason for taking up the work. The old order is superannuated, worn thread-bare and out of use. There are some good things indeed, but they are not as good as they should have been. The Outlaw will show that he can help the formation of a better world, a world of a different material. The old things are unfit for use. The very few good elements that remain are not the best. Thus a reform is necessary and Rob Roy will help this reform. *Stuff*—material. *Other*—different from the present.

**St. 22.** *I, too*—like Napoleon. *My kings*—Napoleon had his puppet kings. About the time that this poem was

written Napoleon's brother Joseph was made king of Naples and another brother Louis was king of Holland. Byron in his *Ode to Napoleon*, says—

“ And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,  
And thanked him for a throne !”

*The sign, &c.*—The life or death of those kings would depend upon a sign from me. *Kingdoms &c.*—Another *cloud-simile*, of which Wordsworth was fond. As clouds roll about at the mercy of the wind so kingdoms will shift from one monarch to another at the will of Rob Roy, as they did at the mercy of Napoleon. **Expl.**—*Rob Roy proudly ranks himself with Napoleon.* Had he been living about the time this poem was written Rob Roy would have made himself the arbiter of the fates of kings as Napoleon had been. He too would have had his puppet kings whose life or death would have depended upon his arbitrary will. He would have had kingdoms roll about from one king to another at his mercy as a cloud rolls about from place to place at the mercy of the wind.

St. 23 *Thought &c.* In app. to the following sentence. “France...Roy.” A happy thought indeed ! *Ironic.* **Expl.** —*The poet classes Rob Roy with Napoleon.* Had his words been fulfilled—ha ! Rob Roy lived in the present days and had his will been enacted at the sword's point, he would have been a lawless conqueror like Napoleon. There is nothing improbable in the supposition. The state of things in Great Britain would very likely have been one of lawlessness ; and then would have followed a consequence glorious indeed, to contemplate which would have given us joy, *viz.*, that Great Britain could have boasted of her Rob Roy as France has been boasting of her Napoleon.

ST. 24. **Expl.**—*The poet is of opinion that to rank Rob Roy with Napoleon would be doing an injustice to the former.* Rob Roy had none of the grasping tyranny of Napoleon. He was a man of noble heart, while Napoleon was a man of inordinate selfish ambition. And Byron too thinks him a "vile spirit," a ruthless "Desolator." W. would not do this injustice to the memory of the daring Outlaw of the Highlands anywhere in the world, least of all, while standing by his grave, a place which demands the greatest reverence.

ST. 25. *Wild thoughts*—lawless theories, stated in ll. 21.-22, &c. *Chieftain*—the leader or a branch of a Highland clan. *Clan*—the Clan Macgregor, to which Rob Roy belonged. See *Introductory Question*. *Liberty*—which Napoleon destroyed. • **Expl.**—*The poet indignantly contrasts the selfish ambition of Napoleon with Rob Roy's rough and ready assertion of freedom.* The Highland free-booter was undoubtedly superior to the French tyrant. He had no doubt his peculiar theories, too vain and wild to be carried out in this world ; but yet he never, like Napoleon, sacrificed the freedom of men to his reckless selfishness. He fought in the cause of liberty. Napoleon was a blood-thirsty tyrant Cf. Byron—

"Ill minded man ! why scourge thy kind  
Who bow'd so low the knee ?  
By gazing on thyself grown blind,  
Thou taught'st the rest to see."  
"Fair freedom ! we may hold thee dear.  
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear  
In humblest guise have shown.  
Oh ! ne'er may tyrant leave behind  
A brighter name to lure mankind !"

—*Ode to Napoleon.*

ST. 26. *Behold the light*—live. *Stirred*—exerted. **Par.**  
—And had it been the lot of Rob Roy to live in our days he

(unlike Napoleon) would have exerted himself in the noblest endeavours and fought for justice—he would have aimed at the removal of real grievances instead of using his strength in oppressing the poor.

St. 27. *Stay*—prop, support. *Heart*—symbolising feeling. *Hand*—symbolising action. *Thine*—thy strength.

**Expl.**—*The poet describes the noble traits in Rob Roy's character, traits which raised him above other blood-thirsty outlaws.* Had Rob Roy been living now he would have used his strength in the cause of justice ; for he was always the support of the poor. He encouraged poor men in their pursuits by infusing noble feeling into their hearts, and helped them by his own efforts. (He robbed the rich, only to relieve the poor.) The people who were unjustly oppressed were protected by his superior strength. They could draw upon his great strength whenever they were in need of it to protect themselves against oppression.

St. 28 & 29. *Bear witness*—give evidence in support of Rob Roy's kindness to the poor. *Pensive*—thoughtful. *Strays*—wanders way from the beaten pathway. *Loch Veol*—See T. N. *Braes*—broken ground, declivities. *Loch Lomond*—(Craig Royston, of which Rob Roy became the owner, was situated to the east of this lake. *Attest*—Bear testimony to. *The proud &c.*—The glistening of the eyes at the mention of Rob Roy's name shows the pride that lurks in the heart of the Highland farmer. **Par.**—The thoughtful sigh of the farmer wandering alone upon the hill-tops by Loch Veol or the hill sides by Loch Lomond shows how kind Rob Roy was to the poor. Their faces brighten, their eyes glisten, at the mention of Rob Roy's name, throughout the hills and valleys, to the farthest extent, showing how dear is his memory to them.

**Q. Describe the character of Rob Roy as depicted by Wordsworth.**

A. He was "an Outlaw of daring mood" like Robin Hood. His wisdom was as great as his bravery. He was "as wise in thought as bold in deed." He held wild theories which could not be applied to the then existing state of things. His guiding principle was generalised from the reign of might in the whole animal world. He would, if he could, establish force instead of the cumbrous bundle of laws and statutes. His creed was—

"That they should take, who have the power,  
And they should keep who can."

Yet "this wild chieftain of a savage clan" had not the self-centred ambition of a lawless conqueror like Napoleon. Like Robin Hood he was a kind and gentle robber and while he took from the rich, was liberal in relieving the poor.

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### TO THE MEN OF KENT.

**Q. When was this poem written ?**

A. It was composed in October 1803, and first published in 1807. It was one of the poems on Liberty.

**Q. Give an account of the occasion of the poem ?**

A. The mischievous and disgraceful treaty of Amiens with Napoleon proved hollow and short-lived. War was again declared between England and France in May, 1802. Napoleon organised a vast flotilla to convey his army across the channel. The warlike excitement in England was great. Vast preparations were made to meet this expected invasion. Wordsworth praises the men of Kent for the leading part they took in these preparations.

1. *Vanguard of liberty*—the leaders in a system of defensive operations to uphold the liberty of Englishmen against

Napoleon. *Vanguard*—the front ranks of an army, opp. to the *rear-guard* 2. *Doth...brow against*—presents a bold front to. The coast of Kent seems to defy the opposite coast of France. In 'haughty brow' there is a reference to the rocky southern coast of England. 4. **Hardiment**—courage, hardihood; an archaism. [Cf. "Changing *hardiment* with great Glendower."—*Shakes*] 5. *Words of invitation*—message of challenge. 6. *Countenance*—appearance. 7. *Ken*—see. 8. *Shouting...intent*—sending forth a din of war, showing your laudable resolve to resist all aggression. **1—8. Expl.**—*The poet encourages the Men of Kent, to prove their courage by sending words of challenge to France.* The bold men of Kent have always been in the front ranks of liberty lovers. They are the children of a land the high cliffs of which seem to defy the coast of France. The projected invasion of Napoleon being about to be undertaken, it is the proper time for them to show their courage. The French soldiers can almost see their dreadful array of battle, their shining lances and hear their determined din of war. 9. *Left single*—when the men of Essex and Hertfordshire had dispersed, during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. *Parley*—a formal conference with an enemy. (Richard II.) *Of yore*—in days of old. 10. *Gallant wreath*—the palm of courage. In the word 'wreath' there is an allusion to the wreath of laurel with which victors were formerly crowned in Greece. 11. *Charters*—documents of right and liberty. **9—11. Expl.**—*The poet appeals to the glorious traditions of the Kentish men who, during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, bravely met King Richard II at Smithfield under the leadership of Wat Tyler, after the men of Essex and Hertford had dispersed. They discussed with the King the terms upon which they could submit, and after a*

long parley succeeded in obtaining a confirmation of the charter of liberty which they had formerly enjoyed. **12—14.**

**Par.**—There is no need of parleying now, for the whole of Britain will join in the preparations for war against Napoleon. There are two alternatives before the English people. They will either conquer or die.



## THE DAFFODILS.

**Q. When was the poem composed and to what incident did it owe its origin ?**

**A.** It was written at Town-end, Grasmere in 1804, and owed its origin to the incident thus referred to in Miss Wordsworth's *Journal* under date of April 15, 1802 :—“When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park, we saw a few daffodils close to the water side. We fancied that the sea had floated the seeds ashore, and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more and yet more, &c., &c.” See T. N.

**Q. Give the gist of the poem.**

**A.** The poet describes a wonderful bed of golden daffodils which he once saw dancing in the breeze by a lake, and the pleasure which the memory of the scene constantly afforded him.

1. *Lonely as a cloud*—in a mood of isolation from the noisy world, as clouds hang high above the earth. Another of Wordsworth's favourite cloud-similes. See *Hart-leap Well*, l. 2 and *Rob Roy's Grave*, l. 91. 3. *Crowd—a host*—a large company, to be contrasted with the poet's loneliness referred to in l. 1. The poet's loneliness of mind is disturbed by the sight of a quantity of daffodils. They are a “jocund company” in the presence of which the poet cannot maintain

his isolation. Similarly in his *Immortality* he describes how the "jollity" of the season breaks in upon and dissolves his grief. 4. *Golden*—yellow-coloured. **Daffodils**—The *Narcissus pseudo-narcissus*, plants of the lily tribe, with long leaves and tall stalks with beautiful yellow flowers, which appear in spring. The word is a corruption of the Lat. *asphodelus*. The initial *d* is no part of the word. It is a parasitic letter, perhaps a trace of the Fr. *de*, or '*d*', by constant association with which the proper word got the addition of its initial [Cf. *Nickname*—(a) *nekename*.] The M. E. form was *affodile*. 5. *The lake*.—"The daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Illswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves." 1—6. **Par.**—*These lines form the introductory part of the poem.* The poet was once walking in a mood of loneliness as great as that of the cloud blown gently in the air, high above hills and valleys, when his loneliness was broken in upon by a large collection of bright yellow daffodils gaily waving in the breeze, under the trees by the lake.

7. *Continuous*—as closely situated as stars in the *milky way*, in which the stars are so thickly set as to produce the impression of a continuous line or streak of light. 8. **Milky way**—A luminous belt of light seen in the sky at night, consisting of innumerable stars and nebulae. The "crowd" of daffodils is compared to the Milky Way on two points—(1) thickness of situation and (2) brightness of colour. The daffodil is golden and the Milky Way too is called by Tennyson 'the golden Galaxy':—

"Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy—Lady of Shalott.



9. *Stretched*—extended as a continuous belt about the bay as the Galaxy extends across the sky. 10. *Margin*—bank. 12. *Sprightly*—Note how W. again attributes the consciousness of pleasure to the inanimate daffodils. *Tossing*—tumbling up and down. 14. *Outdid*—surpassed. *Glee*—joy, gayety. **7—14. Par.**—*These lines form the descriptive part of the poem.* The daffodils grew thick and close and formed a continuous line along the bank of the bay, almost as long as the “golden galaxy” in the sky, thickly studded with stars. [The poet here as in his poem *To the Daisy* (ll, 17, 18, 21--2, 25, &c.) plays with his *fancy* in likening the line of daffodils to the Milky Way.] The poet could see almost as many as ten thousand of their heads waving merrily in the breeze. The waves of the lake, too, were dancing, but the flowers seemed to dance higher and faster, thus surpassing the waves in gayety. 15. *A...gay*—A poet could not help feeling gay. For a similar sentiment, Cf. *Immortality* :—

“And all earth is gay !  
Land and sea  
Give themselves up to jollity.

. . . . .  
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee  
My heart is at your festival  
The fulness of your bliss I feel, I feel it all.”

16. *Found*—merry. **A poet...company**—A poet is sooner stirred by Nature's beauty than other persons. Hence such a beautiful scene as this presented by the host of golden daffodils cannot but make a poet feel gay. Wordsworth especially can detect feeling even in inanimate objects. He therefore cannot but feel the exhilarating influence of the dancing daffodils. (As the *Daisy* too “repairs his heart with gladness,” II. 46—7.) 18. **Wealth**—a rich store of future reflections. 17—8. **I gazed...brought**—I fixed my look

upon the 'jocund company' of daffodils but did not realise at the instant what a rich store of ideas and images the flowers were to give me in the future (when revived by memory.) 20. *Vacant*—empty; not occupied with any particular thoughts; opp. to *pensive* or thoughtful. 21. **Flash upon**—suddenly dawn upon. **Inward eye**—mind's eye; the power of forming images of past things, the power of representation. 22. **Bliss of solitude**—which gives such exquisite pleasure in moments of loneliness, for even in solitude we seem to be enjoying the pleasure of the 'jocund company' of the daffodils. **They...solitude Expl.**—*The poet reveries the consolations which we often derive from our faculty of representation.* The daffodils in all their brightness and beauty will in the future start up suddenly in his memory through the mind's power of representation which enables even the solitary to find happiness by recalling scenes which have given them pleasure in the past. With the expression in ll. 21-22, we may compare the following lines in his *Highland girl* :—

"In sports like these we prize  
Our memory, feel that she hath eyes."

And the following passage from *Tintern Abbey* :—

"These beauteous forms,  
Through a long absence, have not been to me  
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye ;  
But oft in lonely rooms, and mid the din  
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,  
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet, &c."

[The two lines in the text, characterised by W. as the best in poem were written by his wife.]

**15—24. Par.**—This is the concluding or *reflective* part of the poem. Having described the beautiful "crowd" of *Daffodils* Wordsworth follows his characteristic method of withdrawing from the outward scene described into his deeper self to exhaust its meaning. [See how he spiritualises the Cuckoo into a "wandering voice" telling him a "tale of visionary hours."] The scene was so beautiful that a poet could not help being merry in the company of the dancing daffodils. The poet continued gazing at the scene but could not then realise what a rich store of meditation the sight was to give him in the future. And now often when he is resting, whether idly or in meditation, the scene suddenly starts up before that eye of the mind from which even the solitary may derive happiness by recalling past scenes of pleasure. Memory fills the poet's heart with pleasure and he shares again the joy of the daffodils.

## THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET.

**Q. When and where was the poem composed ?**

**A.** It was written at Townend, Grasmere, in 1804 and first published in 1807.

**Q. What suggested the thought of the poem ?**

**A.** The case of a poor widow who lived in the town of Perth. See T. N.

**Q. Give the general purport of the poem ?**

**A.** It purports to be the lamentation of a poor woman whose only son apparently a sailor, has been absent from home so long that she has lost all hope of ever seeing him and fears that he has perished in the sea. It is a pathetic tale of despair.

**I. Worse...dead.**—This uncertainty about thy fate is more painful than the certain knowledge of thy death. *Find me*—come to me. *Uddone*—beset with poverty. *If...bed*—if thou art laid in the grave, i. e., if thou art dead. *The same*—thy death. *Blame*—thee for not taking notice of me. **Par.**—*The widow laments the absence of her son who has been unheard of for a long time.* Dear son, I long to know where thou art. This racking suspense about thy fate is very painful to me. Prosperous or poor, come to me. Let me know for certain whether thou art alive or dead. If thou art laid in thy grave, let me know it as a positive truth that I may resign myself to my lot, and cease blaming thee for not returning to me or grieving for thee.

**II. Tidings**—news. *Despaired*—of thy return. *Beguiled*—deluded with false hopes. *Very bliss*—the greatest happiness at the belief that thou wouldst return. *Catch at*—eagerly seize these false hopes. *Miss*—the delusive hope melts away. *Darkness*—uncertainty or suspense. **Par.**—*The widow describes the torture which she has endured for seven years on account of the uncertainty about the fate of her only son.* It is painful for a widow to have received no news of her only son for seven years, sometimes to have despaired of his return, sometimes to have hopes of it, believed in rumours and always to have been deluded with false hopes, and that often with thoughts of the greatest happiness—that he was sure to come. This golden vision I eagerly cling to, but all at once it melts away leaving me in a state of painful suspense, the like of which has never been known.

III. *Prime*—the first. *Ingenuous*—candid, simple. *Things that wanted grace*—unbecoming actions. *As...said*—as rumour says. *Base*—mean. *Blush*—of shame. *Par.*—A mother's affection goes back to the past and traces the virtues of her child. The mother in a tone of pathetic despair recounts the virtues of her lost son. He was, she says, beautiful in person and possessed the highest moral qualities. His birth and education were of no mean order. She sent him out equipped with the best moral traits. He was simple, pure-hearted and brave. If ever rumour ascribed to him wild and thoughtless actions they yet never showed his moral weakness. She never had reason to be ashamed of her son.

IV. *What power...unawares*—The heedless child does not know how powerfully the slightest cry uttered by him in his play affects his mother—how the mother is shocked by his cry though prompted by the greatest glee in him. *Unawares*—without his knowledge. *Years...distress*—The mother's anxiety about her child increases as he grows up. Hence the afflicted widow's intense agony at the absence of her grown-up son. *But...less*—but her love does not on that account diminish with her child's growth. *Par.*—The afflicted Margaret in her mental agony describes a mother's watchful care for her child. The child, in the height of pleasure at his play, full of little cares for his play-things, will send forth a scream of fun. But he does not know, cannot even dream, what a terrible shock it gives to the sensibility of his mother who carelessly watches him with anxious concern. As he grows older his mother's anxieties increase, but she does not love him the less on that account.

V. *Ill thought*—a painful supposition, viz., that you had neglected me. *Blind*—indifferent to the real state of things. *Pride...wrong*—Pride shall help me in bearing the neglect of my son, i. e., I shall be too proud to complain of his neglect. *Par.*—I long tortured myself with the thought that you had neglected me and to help myself in bearing this supposed neglect I resolved to be too proud to complain of your neglect, knowing fully that I had been to you as kind a mother as mother could be. That I have always been kind to you will be seen from the fact that I have often wept for you in silence and solitude.

VI. *Humbled*—reduced to misfortune. *Dread*—fear to approach. *Think...pain*—Let not the thought that I shall receive you with indifference give you pain. *With better eyes*—judge things from a point of view different from that

which I took when you were a rising man. Once I had set my heart too much upon you rising in worldly prosperity, but now I have learnt to despise worldly grandeur. *Worldly grandeur*—earthly pomp; prosperity in life. *Lies*—the false hopes which fortune gives rise to. **Par.**—The afflicted Margaret assures her son that he need not fear to approach her door even if he has met with misfortune and poverty—even if he has found it hopeless to gain wealth and honour. A mother's affection for her son is independent of his worldly prosperity. Once indeed she had set a high value upon it and set her heart perhaps a little too much upon her son acquiring fortune and distinction; but she has now learnt to set a low value upon worldly pomp and the false hopes with which fortune often deludes man.

VII. *Alas! the fowls, &c.*—There is an obvious reference in this stanza to Cowper's poem on the fate of Alexander Selkirk who was cast away on an uninhabited island. One of Cowper's verses is as follows:—

"Society, Friendship, and Love,  
Divinely bestowed upon man,  
O had I the wings of a dove,  
How soon would I taste you again."

*Short voyage*—a reference to birds of passage which fly over land and sea in a short time, and never miss the way. *The wanderers*—The migratory birds. *Their delight*—the land to which they love to migrate. *Chains, &c.*—The passage of men is barred by land and seas; we are bound as it were in chains. *Us*—as contrasted with the birds of heaven. **Par.**—Birds which "change their season" are aided in their flight by natural winds. They fly and with the help of the wind in a short time reach the land to which they migrate. But we mankind are barred in our passage by lands and seas. There is no wind to help us. Hence we cannot go to you nor can you come to me. The only solace left to you is that I wish you well—a vain thought indeed, for you are now perhaps beyond the reach of human comfort.

VIII. *Maimed*—Bruised. *Mangled*—Mutilated. *Inhuman*—cruel. *Inheritest* has found shelter in a lion's den, which is no longer occupied by the lion. *Summoned, &c.*—drowned in the sea. *Thou, thou*—the repetition is pathetic. *Keep*—maintain, preserve for ever. **Incommunicable sleep**—i. e., death, a sleep of which thou canst send me no word. *Death* is often compared to sleep, as in Shakespeare—

"Duncan is in his grave,  
After life's fitful over he sleeps well."—*Macbeth*.

*Incommunicable*—in which one cannot communicate with others nor can be communicated with. The word is a favourite one with poets. Compare—

“Things not revealed, which the invisible king,  
Only omniscient, hath suppressed in night  
To none *communicable* in Earth or Heaven.”

—*Paradise Lost*, VII., 122—4.

And—“My secret groans must be unheard by thee,  
Thou wouldst weep tears bitter as blood to know  
Thy lost friend's *incommunicable* woe.”

—Shelley, *Julian and Maddalo*.

**Par.**—*The imagination of the afflicted mother calls up pictures of the horrible fate which may possibly have befallen her long lost son. He is perhaps lying mutilated and bruised by numerous savages in a captive's cell and groaning in agony; or may have been shipwrecked upon some desert where he takes shelter in an empty lion's den. It is also possible that some invisible power has called him down to the bed of the deep sea where he with his companions is sleeping the sleep of which he can send her no word, i. e., that he is drowned at sea.*

IX. *Look for*—Seek to find. *Ghost*—of my departed son. *Force, &c.*—i. e., through the barrier that separates life from death. *Intercourse*—communication. *Wail*—lament. *Longings*—desire. **Par.**—I seek to have a sight of the ghost of my departed son, but no ghost will tear asunder the veil between life and death and come to me from the realm of the dead. It is a vulgar superstition that a communication between the living and the ghosts of the dead is possible. For, had it been true, I should have seen my son whom I lament with such a deep yearning love.

X. *Apprehensions*—fears. *Shake me*—cause me to tremble with fear. *Answer, &c.*—solve my doubts as to my son's fate. **Par.**—*The uncertainty about the fate of her son has affected Margaret with a sort of vague nervous fear. Apprehensions prey upon her mind in large numbers. She starts at the rustle of the grass. Even the shadows of clouds floating overhead makes her tremble with dread. She questions all things to know what has become of her son; but none of them is able to solve her doubts. The whole world seems to be apathetic towards her grief.*

XI. *Participation*—sharing. *Chance*—happens. **They pity...grief**—They feel pity for me, no doubt seeing my

miserable appearance, but they do not inquire into the cause of my grief. My affliction stirs no doubt a momentary impulse of compassion in passers-by, but no one ever feels sympathy for my misfortune so as to give relief. *Woe*—pain of suspense—the tortures with which I am afflicted not knowing any thing certain about you. **Par.**—An afflicted mother's sorrows are so great that they cannot be shared with others and cannot be relieved. A passer-by may occasionally feel pity for my miserable appearance but no one ever stops to question me about my grief. Since, then, I have no friend in this world, my son, either come to me or send me news of your fate that my racking suspense may be resolved into the uniform agony of despair.

### FIDELITY.

**Q. Give the date of the poem?**

**A.** It was composed in 1805, and first published in 1807.

**Q. Upon what incident is this poem based?**

**A.** A young man named Charles Gough came on an angling excursion to Patterdale early in April, 1805. While attempting to cross Helvellyn, a mountain on the border of Cumberland and Westmoreland, he slipped from the height of a steep rock and died.

**Q. Has any other poet used the same incident and admired the dog's fidelity?**

**A.** Yes; Scott in his *Helvellyn*.

**ST. 1.** *A dog or fox*—From the cry it could not be ascertained whether it was a dog or a fox. *Stirring*—movement. *Brake*—a thicket, a place overgrown with ferns. *Fern*—a plant with featherlike leaves. *Glancing*—coming for an instant to view and again disappearing. *Covert green*—a shady thicket. **Purport**: The shepherd hears a sound, which may be the cry of a dog or a fox. He stops and looks about the place and discerns in the distant thicket something stirring. A dog is seen for a moment through the shady bush.

**ST. 2.** *Wild and shy*—not like mountain dogs which are fearless. **Purport**: *The dog is described.* It was not a dog accustomed to the locality—it was restless and timid. Its cry too was unusual. And yet no hunter was to be seen anywhere in the neighbourhood. Hence the presence of the dog there was inexplicable.

St. 3. **Cove**\*—A sheltered hollow. *Recess*—a nook. *Lofty precipice*—a steep height of rock. **Tarn**—a small lake among the mountains. *Bosom*—heart, central part. *Helvellyn*—a Border mountain. *Trace of hand*—mark of human workmanship. **Purport** : *Describes the place where the dog was found by the shepherd.* It was a large shady nook, covered with ice till June. There was a steep rock on one side and below it was a motionless lake. It was in the heart of Helvellyn, far from the public road or any human dwelling, untrodden by human foot and having no trace of human effort.

St. 4. **Lonely cheer**—a sound of life hardly breaking the monotonous solitude of the place. *Crags*—rough, steep rocks. *Repet*—echo. *Croak*—hoarse cry. **Austere symphony**—harmonious solemnity. *Symphony*—unison, consonance agreeing together of sound. *Austere*—severe; stern. *Flying shroud*—the moving pall of mist covers the scene as with a white winding-sheet. *If it could*—as it is, the wind is kept confined within the craggy walls. **Par.**—*The poet goes on describing the place where the shepherd has found the dog.* There now and then a fish leaps up from the water; the sound of life is heard in the still solitude but the monotony of solitude remains unbroken. A solemn echo is returned by the rocks in harmony with the sound. The rainbow appears in the sky—the clouds float about, and white moving mists cover the rocks as with a winding sheet. The wind blows high and shrill, and is so violent that if there were no obstructions the blasts would fly swiftly past, but the rocky walls prevent the blasts from flying away. So they keep whistling within the craggy bounds.

St. 5. *Boding*—foreboding evil. **Par.**—The shepherd stood for a time before the scene with a vague presentiment that some calamity had occurred about the place. Then following the dog over rocks and stones he came to a near spot where he found a human skeleton on the ground. Terrified he looked round to find what had happened there.

St. 6. *Abrupt*—perpendicularly steep. *It*—the meaning of the whole thing—the dog, the skeleton, &c. **Purport**: All in an instant the whole thing flashed upon the shepherd's mind. It became clear to him that the man had fallen from these steep and dangerous rocks—a terrible place. The shepherd immediately recognised in the skeleton the traveller who had passed that way sometime ago.

St. 7. **Par.**—The poet will now reveal a wonder for the sake of which he tells this sad story. This wonder well deserves



being recorded in words which are more lasting than other material monuments. This dog which was still flitting about the place and repeating the same cry of fear, had dwelt in that wild heart of the mountains for three months.

ST. 8. **Par.**—*The poet describes the dog's fidelity to his master.* There was strong evidence to show that since the day on which this unfortunate traveller had met with his terrible fate, this dog watched his master, either roaming near about the place or standing by the dead man. But how the dog had managed to keep himself alive in that bleak solitude for so long a time is a wonder which can be explained only by God who gave him that sublime fidelity and that super-humanly strong feeling of attachment which no death could destroy.

## TO SLEEP.

**Q. Give the date of the poem.**

**A.** It is the fourteenth of the poet's Miscellaneous Sonnets: assigned by Prof. Knight to the year 1806. It was published in 1807.

**Q. Give the argument of the poem.**

**A.** The poet relates how he has passed several sleepless nights and tried in vain to get sleep, and hopes that he will be more successful this night.

1. *Flock of sheep*—the continuous sound of a flock of sheep passing slowly by, one after the other, induces sleep by excluding exciting thoughts from the mind. 2. *The sound of rain*—the steady patter of rain. *Bees &c.*—In the house of Morphens (the God of sleep), as described by Spenser, (*Faerie Queene*, l, 1—41) the only noise that was heard was that produced by a "trickling stream" and "ever-drizzling rain" mixed with a "murmuring wind much like the sowne (sound) of swarming bees." 4. *Smooth fields*—large expanses of meadow land have a soothing monotony which favours sleep. 6. *And soon, &c.*—the night will soon pass away and dawn appear. 7. *First*—the earliest matin notes of the bird. 8. **Melancholy cry**—The notes of the *Cuckoo* are joyful as bringing tidings of approaching spring. But to the sleepless man the cry sounds melancholy. 10. *Stealth*—the use of artifices like the recollection of the sound of falling water, the murmur of bees, &c. 11. *So*—in a similar manner, *viz.*, the invention of devices. *Wear*—~~waste~~; the word indicates the tedious nature of the process. 12. **Without...wealth?**—Morning hours which are con-

sidered the best in the day cannot be profitably used by one who has passed a sleepless night. 13. **Blessed...day**—the happy separator of one day from another. The time (*i. e.*, night) between one day and another is devoted to sweet sleep. 14. **Mother...thoughts**—sleep soothes the brain and favours thoughts. **Joyous health**—sleep promotes the health of both mind and body. [Read in this connexion Shakespeare's famous invocations of sleep, *Hen. IV*, Part II, III, i. 5 et seq., and *Macbeth* II, ii. 37—40, in T. N. ]

**Q. What is the rationale of such specifics for sleep as Wordsworth suggests?**

A. "By forcing the mind to think of indifferent objects, more agitating topics are perforce excluded, and the brain obtains that repose without which sleep is impossible."—Turner.

**Q. Explain : Come...health.**

A. The poet invokes sleep and refers to its use. Sleep is the happy state which parts one day from another. It is also the refreshing power to which we owe the health of both mind and body. It repairs the lost energy of the brain and the organism, thus helping thought and preventing physical prostration.

## THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

**Q. Give the date of the poem.** [A. 1807.]

**Q. State the argument of the poem.**

A. The poet addresses Liberty, and reminds her of the special love she has always had for mountain lands and seagirt islands. He implores her, now that she has been driven out of Switzerland, to cling all the closer to England, her last refuge in Europe.—Peterson.

**Q. To what historical period does it refer?**

A. This was about two years before the Battle of Trafalgar had put an end to all hope of a French invasion of England. All the free countries of Europe had fallen before Napoleon. Switzerland was usurped by the French in 1800; Venice in 1797. England was about the only country left unconquered.

1-2. **Voices**—sounds, the sound of the sea-waves and that of the waterfalls of mountains. 2. *One...mountains—*

So Milton in *L'Allegro* :—"The mountain nymph, Sweet Liberty." 3-4. *Rejoice*—take delight in. **Chosen music**—the sound which you love to hear. It means that mountains and seagirt islands have been the favourite seats of liberty—a reference to the fact that the inhabitants of mountains and islands preserve their liberty for the longest time, as they are protected by natural barriers against foreign invasion ; as examples of mountainous seats of liberty we take Switzerland, Wales, &c., in the past, of islands, we take England in the present day. 1-4. **Expl.**—*The poet invokes the spirit of Liberty and describes her favourite seats.* The roll of the mighty ocean has a sublime music. The tumble of the mountain cascade also has a loud and awe-inspiring sound. From the oldest times Liberty has loved to hear these sounds. They have been her favourite music. This is a poetical way of stating the simple fact that lands bordering on the sea (like Venice and England) and mountain fastnesses (like Switzerland) have maintained their liberty for the longest time. 5. *Tyrant*—Napoleon. **Holy glee**—righteous joy. *Holy*—Thy patriotism has been to thee as pure as thy religion. 6. *Thou fought'st*—referring to the protected struggle of the Swiss against French usurpation. In 1791 France first interfered in the affairs of the Swiss confederation which after three centuries' struggle for freedom had been recognised as independent since 1648. From 1803 to Napoleon's fall Switzerland was virtually a province of France. *Hast vainly striven*—you have fought in vain for Switzerland (in 1807.) 7. *Alpine holds*—the mountain fastnesses of Switzerland. The mountain or "forest" cantons of Switzerland were subjugated after a long resistance. 8. *Where &c.*—to England where no mountain-torrent murmurs. 5-8. **Expl.**—*Wordsworth refers to the subjugation of Switzerland by Napoleon after a protracted struggle.* After the conquest of Switzerland the only free country left in Europe is England. This is stated poetically by an address to Liberty. The tyrant Napoleon came, says the poet and the Swiss people fought against him with religious earnestness and patriotism for a long time, but with all their zēal they could not maintain their liberty. When Switzerland was subjugated, Liberty took refuge in her last stronghold, viz., England where she dwells to this day. She is forced to dwell in a place where yet no sound of mountain waterfalls is heard by her. 9. *Deep bliss*—a source of exquisite happiness, viz., the sound of the mountain torrent which Liberty loved to hear. *Bereft*—deprived. 10. *Cleave*—cling. *That...left*—the quiet sea-home yet left to you, viz., England. 11. *High-sould Maid*—The

Spirit of liberty is compared to a noble-hearted Virgin, for the desire of liberty is one of the highest aspirations of the human soul. **9-14. Par.**—*The poet desires the Spirit of Liberty to remain in England.* It is no doubt true that she has been deprived of one of her comforts, *viz.*, the hearing of the music of mountain cascades. Still the poet prays to her that she may hold fast to England (*i. e.*, that England may not be conquered by the foreign enemy like Switzerland.) For, what can be sadder than that mountain torrents should roll with thundering sound, and the Ocean should send forth its terrible boom and yet the noble spirit of Liberty should not be near to hear them?



## TO A SKYLARK.

### Q. Give the date of the poem.

**A.** It was composed in 1825 at Rydal Mount and published two years later. Wordsworth had composed an earlier poem on the same subject in 1805. Shelley's *Ode to a Skylark* was written in 1820, *i. e.*, five years before the composition of the present poem.

1. **Ethereal minstrel**—One who sings in the higher regions of the atmosphere. The lark is a little gray bird which builds its nest on open grassy fields free from woods, and when singing it mounts high up in the air till it is invisible in a flood of light. *Ethereal*—belonging to *ether*, the poetical name for the upper and purer regions of the air. *Pilgrim of the sky*—a solitary traveller heavenward. The lark does not fly to visit any earthly shrine or holy place but starts on a pilgrimage to heaven itself. *Pilgrim* is from Lat. *peregrinus*. Cf. Shakespeare,—“Hark, hark, the lark at heaven-gate sings”—*Cymbeline*. 2. **Dost--about?** Is it because thou scornest the earth, so full of troubles and anxieties; that thou shunnest it and mountest straight up into ethereal light heavenward? Shelley calls the bird “the scorner of the ground.” 3. **Aspire**—strive to rise higher and higher. *Heart and eye*—not only the sight but the affections of the heart are fixed upon the nest. 4. *Thy nest &c.*—Cf.—

“So the sweet lark, high poised in air,  
Shuts close his pinions to his breast  
If chance his mate's shrill call he hear,  
And drops at once into her nest”—Gay.

*Blind-eyed Susan.*

5. **Quivering**—fluttering, moving quickly. *Composed*—

laid to rest. An absolute construction. *Still*—being still.  
**Par. 1—6.** O thou that singest in the upper air, and goest on a pilgrimage to visit heaven itself! Dost thou scorn the earth which is full of troubles, or, while thou mountest upward, are thy sight and thy love fixed upon thy nest upon the ground covered with dewy grass?—thy nest into which thou canst drop down at your pleasure, the flutter of thy wings having ceased and thy song having stopped. 7. *Leave...wood*—the nightingale loves shady woods but the lark loves open space and builds its nest upon the ground. *Her*—It is the male bird that sings. But poets use the name *Philomela* (feminine) in allusion to the Greek fable that Philomela, daughter of Pandion, King of Attica, was changed into a nightingale. 8. **Privacy of glorious light**—The lark loves to hide itself in the light of heaven. This privacy is contrasted with the privacy of shady woods which the nightingale loves. Cf. *Shelley* :—

“ Like a star of heaven  
 In the broad daylight  
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.”  
 And—“ Like a poet hidden  
 In the light of thought, &c.”

9. *Pour*—Sound is often compared to subtle fluid. See *The Solitary Reaper*, l. 8. 10. *A flood of harmony*—a shower of melody. Cf. “Showers a rain of melody.”—*Shelley*. **More divine instinct**, i. e., than the nightingale’s; the nightingale’s instinct is to live in the darkness of woods, but the lark naturally loves open space and light. It “soars” upward and wraps itself in the light of heaven. Thus the instinct of the lark is more divine, more glorious than that of the nightingale. 11. **Type**—A representative example. A type is that which has the essential qualities of a class and may be taken as a specimen of the class. **Soar...roam**—rise in thought to lofty ideals and aspirations and yet never desert the ordinary duties of life. *Soar*—fly upward, entertain lofty ideas. *Roam*—wander away from the path of ordinary life, deviate from the humble duties of every-day life. 12. *True*—faithful. **Points**—Metaphor from the magnetic needle. *Kindred*—allied. Heaven and home are allied. Home is the only place on earth where we enjoy heavenly bliss. The hearth is heaven on earth. **7—10. Par.**—Let the nightingale seek the solitude of thickets in the night. Thou dost seek a far more wonderful seclusion, viz., that of the highest and brightest regions of the air, where thou coverest thyself with the light of heaven and thence pourest down a shower of melody

with a natural tendency more glorious than that of the nightingale which never "soars" high like thee. **11—12. Expl.**—In the Skylark the poet finds the characteristic which should belong to all truly wise men. The lark soars high into the regions of light and purity but its "heart and eye" are steadfastly fixed upon its nest upon the dewy ground. The wise man also rises in thought to the highest ideas and aspirations, but never scorns even the lowliest duties of life. Wordsworth has found such a wise man in Milton, to whom he says—

"So didst thou travel on life's common way  
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

The lark is compared to the magnetic needle. As the needle constantly points towards its two poles, so the lark soars to heaven and yet never loses sight of its nest on earth. And the wise, whom the lark appropriately typifies, in a similar way never swerve from their lofty ideals as well as their humble duties. They steadfastly adhere to their spiritual ideals and their homely duties.

**Q. What is the leading thought of the poem?**

A. The principal thought is contained in the last two lines which give the poet's view of the truly wise man. As the lark soars heavenward and yet has its heart fixed upon its nest upon the dewy ground, so the wise man rises in thought to the highest aspirations but never deserts the lowliest duties of life.

**Q. Compare Wordsworth's "Skylark" with Shelley's.**

A. Shelley could not conceive any fulness of joy in the present world while Wordsworth constantly testified to the spiritual opulence of this homely earth. This extraordinary contrast comes out in Shelley's *Skylark* and Wordsworth's *Skylark*. Shelley's *Skylark* is the symbol of illimitable thirst drinking in illimitable sweetness—an image of that rapture which no man can ever reach, because it is ever rising with unflagging wing despising old delights. Shelley will not recognise its earthly form or abode at all; it is not a bird whose nest is on the ground; it is a winged desire, always rising, aspiring, singing. Of the two poems Shelley's is far the more wonderful poem, for the quick pulses of the panting measure seem to give us the very beats of those quivering wings, while Wordsworth's stately lines are obviously the expression of the thoughts of a meditative watcher. But while Shelley has

ignored the earth and the real bird altogether in his ideal flight, the firm grasp of Wordsworth's thought gives the green earth her due share in the "ethereal minstrel's" rapture, and bids us observe, that it is not the distance from earth but the nearness to it, which inspires the celestial joy. *It was Wordsworth's life-long faith that fidelity to the kindred points of heaven and home "made both earth the more joyous and heaven the more sublime."* Shelley's was a different creed, the creed of longing and of loss which sought to spring from earth and to create its own heaven, an enterprise in which it is not easy to succeed—*Hutton*.

## A MORNING EXERCISE.

### Q. Give the date of the poem.

A. It was composed in 1828 and first published in 1832. The third stanza was, from 1837 to 1843, the second stanza of the preceding poem. Only the first five stanzas of the poem are given here.

ST. 1. *Hail &c*—The reference is to the Skylark which is the happiest of all creatures. **Skilled...low**—The lark has the happiest instinct of reconciling its *restless* flight upward into heaven with its *steadfastness* to its nest. It thus links the *high* heaven with the *low* earth. **Halcyon**—is the Greek for a king-fisher, compounded of *hals* (the sea) and *kuo* (to brood on.) The ancient Sicilius believed that the king-fisher laid its eggs and incubated for fourteen days before the winter solstice, on the surface of the sea, during which time the waves of the sea were always unruffled. Cf.—

"Amdist our arms as quiet you shall be  
As halcyon brooding on a winter's sea."—*Dryden*.

*Build her hopes*—build her nest floating on the sea. *Hope*—because the halcyon's cherished hope or care is only for her nest. **Thou leav'st**—With characteristic forbearance thou leavest the halcyon free to build her floating nest upon which she sets her heart. *Perpetual &c.*—connected with *leav'st* in the next line. Thou leavest to the wandering Bird of Paradise perpetual flight unchecked by earthly ties. *Earthly ties*—attraction for any spot on earth, *e. g.*, the nest for which the halcyon cares. **Expl.**—The poet addresses the *Skylark* and compares it with the halcyon and the footless Bird of Paradise which was fabled to be always on the wing. The halcyon cares only for its nest, and the bird of *par* disse in ceaseless flight. The former has all its affec-

tions fixed on its nest on the sea and the latter has no bond whatever connecting it with any spot on earth. Thus these two birds exhibit two opposite characteristics. But the lark combines both these characteristics for "while its wings aspire," and it rises even to "heaven's gate" its heart and eye are fixed upon the dewy ground.

St. 2. *Faithful*—i. e., to its nest. **Yet more &c.**—There is no doubt that the dove too combines these opposite instincts of *swift flight* and *fixed adherence to the earth*. But the reconciliation is closer and more striking in the *Skylark*. *Constant*—steadfast. *Downward...love*—thy soaring upward, yet having thy sight fixed in love upon thy nest on the grassy ground below. *Aerial singleness*—the loneliness of a pilgrimage to heaven. *Free*—unconfined. Thy journey upward is unconstrained. *Humble*—faithful to the lowliest duties of life. **Expl.**—*The lark is compared with the dove*. The quiet and innocent dove combines lightning rapidity of flight with constancy to its nest. But the combination of these two qualities seem to be more striking in the lark which has its heart fixed upon its nest when flying upward, and yet, when soaring high into heaven, seems to be so lonely and free from any limit to its journey. It stoops to the lowliest duties of life and yet it takes the deepest delight in its untiring upward flight and ceaseless song. For this the poet has taken it as the type of the wise man.

St. 3. *Beyond*—beyond vision. The bird soars so high that it is lost to sight in a flood of heavenly light. *Dar'ing warbler*—fearless singer, because it soars so high. **Love prompted strain**—song inspired by love, thy song seems to take its rise from thy delight in thy nest and thy young ones. Cf. Milton. "*Love laboured song*"—P. L. Bk., V., and Spenser, "*And hearken to the bird's love learned song*"—*Epithalamion*. *Thine*—thy young ones. *Never failing bond*—a constant medium of communication. Thy song connects thy young ones with thyself though so far away. *Thrills*—causes to quiver as it were with the echo of thy song. *Not the less*—because thou art so far away. *Bosom*—figure from the bosom of one lying on the plain, hence, surface. *Yet*—because thy song is prompted by love for thy young ones we should expect that you wouldst sing only in spring when thou hast thy young ones. But thou singest all the year round. *Proud privilege*—a privilege or right of which thou hast reason to be proud, a glorious right, viz., that of singing all the year round, which other birds do not possess. *Independent &c.*—Thy song is not confined to the spring time when trees put



forth new leaves. **par.**—Fearless minstrel ! Soar as high as eye can reach or even beyond human view. Your song which takes its rise in your love for your young ones or which seems to connect you with them for ever echoes from the ground however high you may soar. Still your song is not confined to the advent of spring. You sing all the year round—a glorious right which other birds do not enjoy.

St. 4. **Old ocean**—The ocean has existed from the oldest time and is hence taken by poets as the symbol of eternity. Byron calls it the “image of eternity.” *Partake*—share. *Harmony*—object of partake. *Glede*—with spontaneous delight. **Where...domain**—in open regions of grassy fields and meadowlands which lie expanded like the bound ocean. *Uranir's self*—Urania herself. *Urania* means *Heavenly* and is the goddess of song invoked by Milton at the beginning of *Par. Lost*, Book VII.

“Thou with eternal Wisdom didst converse  
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play  
In presence of the Almighty Father pleased  
With thy celestial song —P. L. VII. 9—12.

*Matins*—thy morning lar. *Heav'n—sphere*—i. e., Heaven **Par.**—The eternal ocean would have been highly delighted to share, with mariners in moments of clam wishing eagerly for a favourable wind to speed their vessel, the harmony which thy love-prompted song makes over board and open meadowlands resembling the broad expanse of ocean itself ; and the Heavenly Muse of Song herself might listen with delight to thy morning notes swelling higher and higher towards the celestial sphere.

St. 5. *Chanter*—singer. *By heaven &c.*—who soarest towards heaven. *That—pursuit*—mounting towards heaven *Sage*—wise. *Singing—shine*—a reminiscence of Addison's lines in the *Spectator*, No. 465. See T. N. **Par.**—Ethereal Minstrel, who art naturally attracted towards heaven and whose flight is never checked by any obstacle to day-light i. e., whose song will be heard in the day-time inspite of a gloomy weather) it is good that in obedience to some wise natural tendency thou stoppest thy song with the approach of evening : for if thy song continued with the appearance of the stars in the sky, no one could be inclined to sleep. It is an instinct that serves a good purpose.

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1. 1039. *Unsubdued regret*—uncontrolled sorrow. *Regret*—lit. a turning back of the thoughts and feelings upon the past. 2. *Fancy*—the mind's faculty of forming images or pictures at pleasure. *Sickens*—is disgusted. *Beset*—surrounded, pressed on all sides. 3. *Baffled*—defeated, disappointed. *On...prey*—tortures the heart to its inmost depths. 4. *Eat...away*—corrode the heart and destroy it, i. e., by continuous strain deprive it of all strength and feeling. 1—5. **What...knows—Par.**—*The poet describes the troubles which beset a sailor's life.* The sailor knows how constant regret for the past is attended with evil consequences (how it may end in turning people mad)—how the mind is tired with forming pictures of delusive hope—how the heart is tortured when its hopeful plans are crushed, and how vain hopes makes the mind despondent and wear away the strength of the heart. 6. *Relentless*—pitiless. The sea when lashed into violent waves by a storm mercilessly destroys life and property. 7. *Holds...dependent*—holds him fast dependent on chance, i. e., makes him helplessly dependent upon chance or uncertainty. 7.—8. **The fickle...power**—The everchanging fortunes of men in power. A reference to the old astrological belief in the influence of stars upon human fortunes. The fortunes of powers vary with the results of battles. One power is humbled and another rises. *Melancholy*—sad, from the sailor's own point of view. 5—8. **The best...war—Expl**—*The poet refers to the uncertainty of the sailor's fate at sea.* The trials of a precarious life (described above) are best known to the sailor whose fate depends upon the merciless sea which makes his left the freak of chance. Throughout the long wars which he has to share when in active service he has to depend upon the shifting fortunes of men in power. The continuation of a war depends upon the uncertain condition of the ceaseless change of power from one state to another. If the party which the sailor serves is in a position to carry the war on, he will have to stick to it, though it is a sad trial for him, for he has left his dear ones behind. 11. *Ancestral floors*—family dwellings. 12. *Tossed about*—in his vessel which rises and falls violently with the waves. *Waste foam*—a vast desolate expanse of frothy water. 13. *Ruminate on*—dwell fondly upon. 14. *Which...come*—which was to be his home with the coming of his dear betrothed, i. e., after marriage. 15. *Or is*—or his wife came and still is there. 16. *Yet...memory*—yet is seen only in his vague recollection, is vaguely remembered. *World of memory*—The world or sphere of memory is different from the world of every day experience. The world of memory is vague, or dreamy. The world of actual experience is clear and hard. 9—16. **Par.**—*The poet explains why the sailor is melancholy during the war.* It is sad,

in sight of alien lands, to dwell constantly upon past recollections, the thoughts of the homes and haunts of early childhood, or, tumbled about along a vast sheet of foamy sea, to ponder over the happy place which was to be his home upon his marriage, where his beloved wife came and still is, but is seen only in the rosy visions of recollection. 17. **Smoothest range**—the most peaceful course, where it is the least troubled with vague apprehensions of reality. 18. **Crossed**—interfered with. **Knowledge of change**—the clear consciousness of the change that has subsequently passed over his life. **Dread of change**—fear of imminent change. 19. *If not so*—even if the peaceful course of the dream is not troubled with the consciousness of change. 20. **A thing...keep**—a condition too happy for mortal man to enjoy for a long time. 17.—20. **Expl**—In the midst of the happiest dream may arise the sudden consciousness of the change that has come over a man's life or a fear of impending evil, and then the spell is broken; or it may happen that the dream may be too happy to be enjoyed by mortal being for a long time—he may be suddenly awakened to the stern realities of life. The home of love and comfort is now a thing of the past to the sailor. It may now and then appear in a happy dream whose spell is broken in a short time. 21.—24. **Hail...sought**—We accord our heartiest praises to the virtues which the danger of sea-life teaches the sailor to exhibit, the virtues of fortitude, resignation, patriotism, &c., which find their best illustration in the life of a sailor. We also gladly congratulate him on the glory which he wins in battles which he fights with bravery, and diligence in the pursuit of the enemy. **Natures...strife**—the struggle of the elements, the wind and waves. A sailor's character is put to the test (1) in elemental strife, during storms, ship-wreck, &c., and (2) in battles. 26. **Imperious**—urgent. **Less...sympathy**—a sympathy which flows gently, i. e., in which the gentler or calmer feelings of our nature are appealed to, as opp. to *imperious* sympathy in which our stronger feelings are roused. 25-33. **But...happiness**—In sympathising with sailors exposed to storms and engaged in battles we are in a mood of excitement. We are alive to their dangers and inflamed with feelings of patriotism and ambition which actuate the sailors themselves. But our sympathy for those gallant captains and sailors whose vessels are no longer tossed about at sea but lying in this calm, moonlit bay, is of a less urgent character. We sympathise with them none the less; but it is in a quiet, undisturbed frame of mind. We accord to them just such a sympathy as will naturally flow from the heart of all men for persons who, having been baffled in the pursuit of gain or fame, desire rest, or who, after a career of successful service, long for retirement.

## APPENDIX—A.

### Test Questions with hints.

1. What is Wordsworth's estimate of Napoleon? Illustrate from his poems. [See *Rob Roy's Grave*.]

2. How is Wordsworth indebted to his sister Dorothy?  
[ " Properly, and in a spirit of prophecy, was she named Dorothy, in its Greek meaning, *gift of God*; well did this name prefigure the relation in which she stood to Wordsworth, the mission with which she was charged—to wait upon him as the tenderest and most faithful of domestics; to love him as a sister; to sympathize with him as a confidante; to counsel him; to cheer him and sustain him by the natural expression of her feelings . . . finally, and above all other ministrations, to ingraft, by her sexual sense of beauty, upon his masculine austerity that delicacy and those graces, which else it never could have had :—

The blessing of my later years  
Was with me when I was a boy :  
She gave me hopes, she gave me fears  
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears.

\* \* \* \* \*

And love, and thought, and joy. (*The Sparrow's Nest*.)

—*De Quincey*]

3. Mention the characteristics of Wordsworth's poetry and illustrate them from the poems in those *Selections*.

4. What is Wordsworth's view of the relation of man to Nature?

[Nature is not to Wordsworth a mere fancied mirror of the human soul. Nature has a soul of her own which holds communion with the soul of man. Thus there arises a mutual sympathy. In the union of the two souls lies a deep and pure joy.]

5. Explain with reference to the context :—

(a) To her fair works did Nature link

...      ...      ...

What man has made of man—*Early Spring*.

(b) And 'tis my faith...breathes.—*ib.*

(c) If such...man?—*Ib.*

(d) Then sometimes, in that silence, while he hung,

...      ...      ...

Would enter unawares into his mind.—*There was a Boy*.

(e) A little while I stood.

...      ...      ...

Voluptuous...banquet.—*Nutting*.

(f) In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay.

...      ...      ...

And on the vacant air.—Ib.

(g) There is a spirit in the woods.—Ib.

6. Is Wordsworth's "Lucy" a real person or a fictitious character?

7. Explain :—

(a) 'Tis past, that melancholy dream.—*Lucy*, II.

(b) A slumber...fears.—*Lucy*, III.

(c) The moving accident...hearts.—*Hart-leap Well*, II.

(d) This best...sympathy divine.—Ib.

(e) She leaves...overgrown.—Ib.

(f) One lesson...conceals.—Ib.

(g) She gave...joy.—*The Sparrow's Nest*.

8. How has Wordsworth described the "Cuckoo?"

9. Explain :—

(a) No bird...mystery.—*To the Cuckoo*.

(b) O blessed bird...home for thee.—Ib.

(c) Could Father Adam...again.—*The Redbreast*.

(d) Can this...in the wood?—Ib.

(e) Here lodge...in a sanctuary.—*To a Butterfly*.

10. Write notes on : *Nature's holy plan; watery vale; concourse wild of jocund din; weeds; a virgin scene; fairy waterbreaks; fleeced with moss; earth's diurnal course; prancing coursers cleaving sleet; cunning artist; blood cries out for blood; a little prattler among men; warbling voice; visionary hours; golden time; the pious bird; cheerer of our indoor sadness.*

11. Explain :—

(a) Men that keep a mighty rout.—*To the Small Celandine*.

(b) I'll make a stir like a sage astronomer.—Ib.

(c) Modest...thysself.—Ib.

(d) Like a careless prodigal.—Ib.

(e) Poets...wanton wooers.—Ib.

(f) Ill befall...flaring hours.—Ib.

(g) They have...thine.—Ib.

(h) Prophet of delight and mirth,

... Tasks that are no tasks renewing.—Ib.

12. Name some of Wordsworth's "Sonnets dedicated to Liberty."

13. Explain :—

(a) Dear God...lying still...*Westminster Bridge*

(b) Once...West...*Venetian Republic*

(c) And, when she took

She miled

(d) Men are

Of that

(e) She is a

(f) Stagnant

Of inward















